13: Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date)
1909 AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

CASTES AND TRIBES

OF

SOUTHERN INDIA

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BY

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AW11 Kerala AW11

Nayar

snake-bite, the Nāyādis wear a brass toe-ring. And, when 600 engaged in catching rats in their holes, they wear round the wrist a snake-shaped metal ring, to render them safe against snakes which may be concealed in the hole.

The Nāyādis who live within the jurisdiction of the Kavalapāra Nāyar near Shoranūr wear the kuḍumi (front lock of hair), as there are no Māppillas (Muhammadans) to molest them. The Kavalapāra Nāyar was at one time an important chief, and directed all Nambutiri jenmis (landlords) who held land within his jurisdiction to bind themselves not to let the land to Māppillas. Nāyādis of other parts are not allowed by the Māppillas to wear the kudumi, and, if they do so, they are taken for Parayans and professional sorcerers, and beaten.

Some Nayādis have become converts to Christianity, others to Muhammadanism, and maintain themselves by begging for alms from Muhammadans. They are called Thoppyitta (cap-wearing) Nāyādis.

The priest of the Nāyādis is called Mūppan. His appointment is hereditary, and he enquires into all matters affecting the community, and can excommunicate a guilty person.*

Average height, 155 cm.; nasal index, 86. 101

Nāyar.—"The Nāyars," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,† 564 "are a Dravidian caste, or rather a community, for we 463 find several distinct elements with totally different occupations among the people who call themselves by this title. The original Nāyars were undoubtedly a military [174] body, holding lands and serving as a militia, but the [701] present Nāyar caste includes persons who, by hereditary

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* This note is based mainly on articles by Mr. S. Appadorai Aiyar and Mr. L. K. Anantha Krishna Aiyar.

† Madras Census Report, 1891.

101 occupation, are traders, artisans, oilmongers, palanquin-
174 bearers, and even barbers and washermen. The fact
564 seems to be that successive waves of immigration brought
[701] from the Canarese and Tamil countries different castes
[463] and different tribes; and these, settling down in the
country, adopted the customs and manners, and assumed
the caste names of the more respectable of the commu-
101 nity that surrounded them. This process of assimilation
564 is going on even yet. Chettis of Coimbatore, for
example, who settled in Palghât and Valluvanâd
within living memory, have developed by this time into
[551] Nâyars. In the census schedules we find instances in
which the males of a house affix the term Nâyar to their
names, while the names of the females end in Chettichi.
Gollas entering the country from the north have similarly,
in course of time, assumed Nâyar customs and manners,
643 and are now styled Nâyars. Again the râjahs and
564 chieftains of the country sometimes raised individuals or
classes who had rendered them meritorious service to
the rank of Nâyars. These men were thereafter styled
Nâyars, but formed a separate sub-division with little
or no communion with the rest of the Nâyar class, until
at least, after the lapse of generations, when their origin
was forgotten. Nâyar may thus at present be considered
to be a term almost as wide and general as Sûdra."

173 According to the Brâhman tradition, the Nâyar
564 caste is the result of union between the Nambûdris with
Dêva, Gandharva and Rakshasa women introduced by
Parasurâma; and this tradition embodies the undoubted
fact that the caste by its practice of hypergamy has had
a very large infusion of Aryan blood. In origin the
Nâyars were probably a race of Dravidian immigrants,
who were amongst the first invaders of Malabar, and as
conquerors assumed the position of the governing and

land-owning class. The large admixture of Aryan blood 173 combined with the physical peculiarities of the country 564 would go far to explain the very marked difference between the Nâyar of the present day and what may be considered the corresponding Dravidian races in the rest of the Presidency.*

In connection with the former position of the Nâyars 175 as protectors of the State, it is noted by Mr. Logan † that 564 "in Johnston's 'Relations of the most famous Kingdom 701 in the world' (1611), there occurs the following quaintly written account of this protector guild. 'It is strange to see how ready the Souldiour of this country is at his Weapons: they are all gentile men, and tearmed Naires. At seven Years of Age they are put to School to learn [868] the Use of their Weapons, where, to make them nimble and active, their Sinnewes and Joints are stretched by skilful Fellows, and annointed with the Oyle Sesamus [gingelly: *Sesamum indicum*]: By this annointing they become so light and nimble that they will winde and turn their Bodies as if they had no Bones, casting them forward, backward, high and low, even to the Astonishment of the Beholders. Their continual Delight is in their [186] Weapon, perswading themselves that no Nation goeth beyond them in Skill and Dexterity.' And Jonathan Duncan, who visited Malabar more than once as one of the Commissioners from Bengal in 1792–93, and afterwards as Governor of Bombay, after quoting the following lines from Mickle's Camoens, Book VII—

'Poliar the labouring lower clans are named:
By the proud Nayrs the noble rank is claimed;
The toils of culture and of art they scorn:
The shining faulchion brandish'd in the right—
Their left arm wields the target in the fight'—

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* Gazetteer of the Malabar district.

† Manual of the Malabar district.

175 564 went on to observe: 'These lines, and especially the two 701 last, contain a good description of a Nayr, who walks along, holding up his naked sword with the same kind of unconcern as travellers in other countries carry in [411] their hands a cane or walking staff. I have observed others of them have it fastened to their back, the hilt being stuck in their waist band, and the blade rising up and glittering between their shoulders' (Asiatic Researches, V. 10, 18). 726 195 564 901 M. Mahé de la Bourdonnais, who had some experience of their fighting qualities in the field, thus described them: 'Les Nairs sont de grands hommes basanés, légers, et vigoureux: Ils n'ont pas d'autre profession que celle des armes, et seraient de fort bons soldats, s'ils étiaent disciplinés: mais ils combattent sans ordre, ils prennent la ſuite dès qu'on les serre de près avec quelque supèriorité; pourtant, s'ils se voient pressés avec vigueur et qu'ils se croient en danger, ils reviennent à la charge, et ne se rendent jamais' (M. Esquer, Essai sur les Castes dans l'Inde, page 181). Finally, the only British General of any note—Sir Hector Munro—who had ever to face the Nāyars in the field, thus wrote of their modes of fighting:—

'One may as well look for a needle in a Bottle of Hay as any of them in the daytime, they being lurking behind sand banks and bushes, except when we are marching towards the Fort, and then they appear like bees out in the month of June.' 'Besides which,' he continued, 'they point their guns well, and fire them well also' (Tellicherry Factory Diary, March, 1761). They were, in short, brave light troops, excellent in skirmishing, but their organization into small bodies with discordant interests unfitted them to repel any serious invasion by an enemy even moderately well organised. Among other strange Malayāli customs, Sheikh

Zin-ud-din * noticed the fact that, if a chieftain was slain, 726
his followers attacked and obstinately persevered in rava- 175
ging the slayer's country, and killing his people till their 564
vengeance was satisfied. This custom is doubtless that 701
which was described so long ago as in the ninth century
A.D. by two Muhammadans, whose work was translated
by Renaudot (Lond., 1733). 'There are kings who, 643
upon their accession, observe the following ceremony. 796
A quantity of cooked rice was spread before the king, 762
and some three or four hundred persons came of their 175
own accord, and received each a small quantity of rice from the king's own hands after he himself had eaten some. By eating of this rice they all engage themselves to burn themselves on the day the king dies or is slain, and they punctually fulfil their promise.' Men, who devoted themselves to certain death on great occasions, were termed Amoucos by the Portuguese; and Barbosa, one of the Portuguese writers, alluded to the practice as prevalent among the Nāyars. Purchas has also the following :—'The king of Cochin hath a great number of Gentlemen, which he calleth Amocchi, and some are called Nairi: these two sorts of men esteem not their lives anything, so that it may be for the honour of the king.' The proper Malayālam term for such men was Châver, literally those who took up, or devoted themselves to death. It was a custom of the Nāyars, which was readily adopted by the Māppillas, who also at times—as at the great Mahāmakkam, twelfth year feast, at Tirunāvāyi †—devoted themselves to death in the

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* The author of Tahafat-ul-Mujahidin or hints for persons seeking the way to God, as it is frequently translated, or more literally an offering to warriors who shall fight in defence of religion against infidels. Translated by Rowlandson, London, 1833.

† See Manual of the Malabar district, 164, sq., and Fawcett, Madras Museum Bull., III, 3, 1901.

175 company of Nâyars for the honour of the Valluvanad
643 Râja. And probably the frantic fanatical rush of the
762 Mâppillas on British bayonets, which is not even yet
796 a thing of the past, is the latest development of this
ancient custom of the Nâyars. The martial spirit of
181 the Nâyars in these piping times of peace has quite
died out for want of exercise. The Nâyar is more and
[224] more becoming a family man. Comparatively few of
them now-a-days even engage in hunting." According
175 to an inscription of the King Kulôttunga I (A.D. 1083-
648 84), he conquered Kudamalai-Nadu, *i.e.*, the western hill
181 country (Malabar), whose warriors, the ancestors of the
703 Nâyars of the present day, perished to the last man in
defending their independence.*

175 The following description of the Nâyars at the
564 beginning of the sixteenth century is given by Duarte
701 Barbosa.† "The Nairs are the gentry, and have no
[411] other duty than to carry on war, and they continually
carry their arms with them, which are swords, bows,
arrows, bucklers, and lances. They all live with the
kings, and some of them with other lords, relations of the
kings, and lords of the country, and with the salaried
governors, and with one another. They are very smart
men, and much taken up with their nobility. . . .
These Nairs, besides being all of noble descent, have to
be armed as knights by the hand of a king or lord with
whom they live, and until they have been so equipped
they cannot bear arms nor call themselves Nairs. . . .
175 In general, when they are seven years of age, they are
868 immediately sent to school to learn all manner of feats
of agility and gymnastics for the use of their weapons.

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* E. Hultzsch, South-Indian Inscriptions, III, 2, 1203.

† Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar. Translation. Hakluyt Society, 1866.

First they learn to dance and then to tumble, and for 175
that purpose they render supple all their limbs from their 868
childhood, so that they can bend them in any direction.
. . . These Nairs live outside the towns separate from 175
other people on their estates which are fenced in. When 564
they go anywhere, they shout to the peasants, that they 683
may get out of the way where they have to pass; and
the peasants do so, and, if they did not do it, the Nairs
might kill them without penalty. And, if a peasant were
by misfortune to touch a Nair lady, her relations would
immediately kill her, and likewise the man that touched
her and all his relations. This, they say, is done to
avoid all opportunity of mixing the blood with that
of the peasants. . . . These are very clean and 175
well-dressed women, and they hold it in great honour to 564
know how to please men. They have a belief amongst 831
them that the woman who dies a virgin does not go to
paradise.'

Writing in the eighteenth century, Hamilton states * 175
that "it was an ancient custom for the Samorin (Zamorin) 643
to reign but twelve years, and no longer. If he died 762
before his term was expired, it saved him a troublesome
ceremony of cutting his own throat on a public scaffold
erected for that purpose. He first made a feast for all
his nobility and gentry, who were very numerous. After
the feast he saluted his guests, went on the scaffold, and
very neatly cut his own throat in the view of the assembly.
His body was, a little while after, burned with great pomp
and ceremony, and the grandees elected a new Samorin.
Whether that custom was a religious or a civil ceremony 175
I know not, but it is now laid aside, and a new custom 178
is followed by the modern Samorin, that a jubilee is 643
796

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* New Account of the East Indies, 1744.

175 178 643 796 proclaimed throughout his dominion at the end of twelve years, and a tent is pitched for him in a spacious plain, and a great feast is celebrated for ten or twelve days with mirth and jollity, guns firing night and day, so at the end of the feast any four of the guests that have a mind to gain a crown by a desperate action in fighting their way through thirty or forty thousand of his guards, and kill the Samorin in his tent, he that kills him succeeds him in his empire. In Anno 1695 one of these jubilees happened, and the tent pitched near Ponnany, a sea-port of his about fifteen leagues to the southward of Calicut. There were but three men that would venture on that desperate action, who fell on, with sword and target, among the guards, and, after they had killed and wounded many, were themselves killed. One of the desperadoes had a nephew of fifteen or sixteen years of age that kept close by his uncle in the attack on the guards, and, when he saw him fall, the youth got through the guards into the tent, and made a stroke at his Majesty's head, and had certainly dispatched him if a large brass lamp which was burning over his head had not marred the blow, but, before he could make another, he was killed by the guards, and I believe the same Samorin reigns yet."

175 564 683 It is noted by Sonnerat * that the Nāyars "are the warriors; they have also the privilege of enjoying all the women of their caste. Their arms, which they constantly carry, distinguish them from the other tribes. They are besides known by their insolent haughtiness. When they perceive pariahs, they call out to them, even at a great distance, to get out of their way, and, if any one of these unfortunate people approaches too near a Nair, and through inadvertence touches him, the Nair has a right

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* Voyage to the East Indies, 1774 and 1781.

175.
to murder him, which is looked upon as a very innocent 564
action, and for which no complaint is ever made. It is 683
true that the pariahs have one day in the year when all [567]
the Nairs they can touch become their slaves, but the [527]
Nairs take such precautions to keep out of the way at
the time, that an accident of that kind seldom happens."
It is further recorded by Buchanan * that "the whole of
these Nairs formed the militia of Malayala, directed by
the Namburis and governed by the Rajahs. Their chief 564
delight is in arms, but they are more inclined to use them 701
for assassination or surprise, than in the open field.
Their submission to their superiors was great, but they
exacted deference from those under them with a cruelty
and arrogance, rarely practised but among Hindus in
their state of independence. A Nair was expected to 564
instantly cut down a Tiar or Mucuai, who presumed to 683
defile him by touching his person; and a similar fate [567]
awaited a slave, who did not turn out of the road as a
Nair passed."

Nâyar is commonly said to be derived from the Sans- 101
krit Nâyaka, a leader, and to be cognate with Naik, and 174
Nayudu or Naidu. In this connection, Mr. L. Moore [127]
writes † that "if a reference is made to the Anglo-Indian Glossary (Hobson-Jobson) by Yule and Burnell, it will be found that the term Naik or Nayakan, and the word Nayar are derived from the same Sanskrit original, and there is a considerable amount of evidence to show that the Nayars of Malabar are closely connected by origin with the Nayakans of Vijayanagar.‡ Xavier, writing in 1542 to 1544, makes frequent references to men whom he calls Badages, who are said to have been

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* Journey through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, 1807.

† Malabar Law and Custom, 3rd ed., 1905.

‡ *Vide* R. Sewell. A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar), 1900.

101 174 collectors of royal taxes, and to have grievously oppressed Xavier's converts among the fishermen of Travancore.* Dr. Caldwell, alluding to Xavier's letters, says † that these Badages were no doubt Vadages or men from the North, and is of opinion that a Jesuit writer of the time who called them Nayars was mistaken, and that they were really Nayakans from Madura. I believe, however, that the Jesuit rightly called them Nayars, for I find that Father Organtino, writing in 1568, speaks of these Badages as people from Narasinga (a kingdom north of Madura, lying close to Bishnaghur).‡ Bishnaghur is, of course, Vijayanagar, and the kingdom of Narasinga was the name frequently given by the Portuguese to Vijayanagar. Almost every page of Mr. Sewell's interesting book on Vijayanagar bears testimony to the close connection between Vijayanagar and the West Coast. Dr. A. C. Burnell tells us that the kings who ruled Vijayanagar during the latter half of the fourteenth century belonged to a low non-Aryan caste, namely, that of Canarese cow-herds.§ They were therefore closely akin to the Nayars, one of the leading Rajas among whom at the present time, although officially described as a Samanta, is in reality of the Eradi, *i.e.*, cow-herd caste.‖ It is remarkable that Colonel (afterwards Sir Thomas) Munro, in the memorandum written by him in 1802 ¶ on the Poligars of the Ceded Districts,

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* Father Coleridge's Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier.

† History of Tinnevelly.

‡ Coleridge's Xavier.

§ Burnell. Translation of the Daya Vibhaga, Introduction. *Vide* also Elements of South Indian Palæography (2nd ed., p. 109), where Dr Burnell says that it is certain that the Vijayanagar kings were men of low caste.

‖ *Vide* Glossary, Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, p. 2, and Day's Land of the Permauls, p. 44

¶ Fifth Report of the Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, II, 499, 530. Reprint by Higginbotham, Madras.

when dealing with the cases of a number of Poligars 101
who were direct descendants of men who had been chiefs 174
under the kings of Vijayanagar, calls them throughout his report Naique or Nair, using the two names as if they were identical. Further investigation as to the connection of the Nayars of Malabar with the kingdom of Vijayanagar would, I believe, lead to interesting results." In the Journal of the Hon. John Lindsay (1783) it is recorded* that "we received information that our arms were still successful on the Malabar coast, and that our army was now advancing into the inland country: whilst the Nayars and Polygars that occupy the jungles and mountains near Seringapatam, thinking this a favourable opportunity to regain their former independence, destroyed the open country, and committed as many acts of barbarity as Hyder's army had done in the Carnatic."

"Some," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes in a note 101
on the Nâyars of Travancore, "believe that Nâyar is derived from Nâga (serpents), as the Aryans so termed the earlier settlers of Malabar on account of the special adoration which they paid to snakes. The Travancore Nâyars are popularly known as Malayâla Sūdras—a term which contrasts them sharply with the Pândi or foreign Sūdras, of whom a large number immigrated into Travancore in later times. Another name by which Nâyars are sometimes known is Malayâli, but other castes, which have long inhabited the Malayâlam country, can lay claim to this designation with equal propriety. The most general title of the Nâyars is Pillai (child), which was once added to the names of the Brāhman dwellers in the south. It must, in all probability, have

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* Lives of the Lindsays. By Lord Lindsay, 1849.

101 been after the Brāhmans changed their title to Aiyar (father), by which name the non-Brāhman people invariably referred to them, that Sūdras began to be termed Pillai. We find that the Vellālas of the Tamil country and the Nāyars of Travancore called themselves Pillai from very early times. The formal ceremony of
556 paying down a sum of money, and obtaining a distinction
553 direct from the Sovereign was known as tirumukham
424 pitikkuka, or catching the face of the king, and enabled the recipients to add, besides the honorary suffix Pillai, the distinctive prefix Kanakku, or accountant, to their name. So important were the privileges conferred by it that even Sanku Annavi, a Brāhman Dalava, obtained it at the hand of the reigning Mahārāja, and his posterity at Vempannūr have enjoyed the distinction until the present day. The titles Pillai and Kanakku are never used together. The name of an individual would be, for example, either Krishna Pillai or Kanakku Rāman Krishnan, Rāman being the name of the Karanavan or the maternal uncle. A higher title, Chempakaraman, corresponds to the knighthood of mediæval times, and was first instituted by Mahārāja Marthanda Varma in memory, it is said, of his great Prime Minister Rāma Aiyyan Dalawa. The individual, whom it was the king's pleasure to honour, was taken in procession on the back of an elephant through the four main streets of the fort, and received by the Prime Minister, seated by his side, and presented with pān-supāri (betel). Rare as this investiture is in modern times, there are many ancient houses, to which this title of distinction is attached in perpetuity. The title Kanakku is often enjoyed with it, the maternal uncle's name being dropped, *e.g.*, Kanakku Chempakaraman Krishnan. Tambi (younger brother) is another title prevalent in

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Travancore. It is a distinctive suffix to the names of 556
Nāyar sons of Travancore Sovereigns. But, in ancient 553
times, this title was conferred on others also, in recogni- 424
tion of merit. Tambis alone proceed in palanquins, and
appear before the Mahārāja without a head-dress. The [644]
consorts of Mahārājas are selected from these families. [584]
If a lady from outside is to be accepted as consort, she is [597]
generally adopted into one of these families. The title
Karta, or doer, appears also to have been used as a
titular name by some of the rulers of Madura. [At the
Madras census, 1901, Kartākkal was returned by Balijas
claiming to be descendants of the Nāyak kings of Madura
and Tanjore.] The Tekkumkur and Vadakkumkur [643]
Rājas in Malabar are said to have first conferred the
title Karta on certain influential Nāyar families. In
social matters the authority of the Karta was supreme,
and it was only on important points that higher author-
ities were called on to intercede. All the Kartas belong [564]
to the Illam sub-division of the Nāyar caste. The title
Kuruppu, though assumed by other castes than Nāyars,
really denotes an ancient section of the Nāyars, charged
with various functions. Some were, for instance, instruc- [644]
tors in the use of arms, while others were superintendents
of maid-servants in the royal household. Writing con- 175
cerning the Zamorin of Calicut about 1500 A.D., Barbosa 556
states that "the king has a thousand waiting women, to 644
whom he gives regular pay, and they are always at the
court to sweep the palaces and houses of the king, and he
does this for the State, because fifty would be enough to
sweep." When a Mahārāja of Travancore enters into a 643
matrimonial alliance, it is a Kuruppu who has to call 584
out the full title of the royal consort, Panappillai Amma, 553
after the presentation of silk and cloth has been per- 644
formed. The title Panikkar is derived from pani, work.

556 553 644 [875] It was the Panikkars who kept kalaris, or gymnastic and military schools, but in modern times many Panikkars have taken to the teaching of letters. Some are entirely devoted to temple service, and are consequently regarded as belonging to a division of Mārans, rather than of Nāyars. The title Kaimal is derived from kai, hand, signifying power. In former times, some Kaimals were recognised chieftains, *e.g.*, the Kaimal of Vaikkattillam in North Travancore. Others were in charge of the royal treasury, which, according to custom, could not be seen even by the kings except in their presence. "Neither could they," Barbosa writes, "take anything out of the treasury without a great necessity, and by the counsel of this person and certain others." The titles Unnithan and Valiyathan were owned by certain families in Central Travancore, which were wealthy and powerful. [692] They were to some extent self-constituted justices of the peace, and settled all ordinary disputes arising in the kara where they dwelt. The title Menavan, or Menon, means a superior person, and is derived from mel, above, and avan he. The recipient of the title held it for his lifetime, or it was bestowed in perpetuity on his family, according to the amount of money paid down as atiyara. As soon as an individual was made a Menon, he was presented with an ola (palmyra leaf for writing on) and an iron style as symbols of the office of accountant, which [451] he was expected to fill. In British Malabar even now every amsam or revenue village has an accountant or writer called Menon. The title Menokki, meaning one who looks over or superintends, is found only in British Malabar, as it was exclusively a creation of the Zamorin. [They are, I gather, accountants in temples.]

564 "There are numerous sub-divisions comprised under the general head Nāyar, of which the most important,

mentioned in vernacular books, are Kiriyam, Illam, 564 Svarupam, Itacheri or Idacheri, Pallichan, Ashtikkurichchi, Vattakätan, Otatu, Pulikkal, Vyapari, Vilakkitalavan, and Veluthetan. Of these Ashtikkurichchi and Pulikkal [463] are divisions of Mārān, Vyapari is a division of Chettis, and Vilakkitalavan and Veluthetan are barbers and washermen respectively.

"The chief divisions of Nâyars, as now recognised, are as follows :—

1. Kiriyam, a name said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit griha, meaning house. This represents the highest class, the members of which were, in former times, not obliged to serve Brâhmans and Kshatriyas.

2. Illakkar.—The word illam indicates a Nambūtiri Brâhman's house, and tradition has it that every illam family once served an illam. But, in mediæval times, any Nâyar could get himself recognised as belonging to the Illam division, provided that a certain sum of money, called adiyara, was paid to the Government. The [262] Illakkar are prohibited from the use of fish, flesh, and [273] liquor, but the prohibition is not at the present day universally respected. In some parts of Malabar, they [178] have moulded many of their habits in the truly Brâhmanical style.

3. Svarupakkar.—Adherents of the Kshatriya families of Travancore. The members of the highest group, Parūr Svarupam, have their purificatory rites performed by Mārāns. It is stated that they were once the Illakkar servants of one Karuttetathu Nambutiri, who was the feudal lord of Parūr, and afterwards became attached to the royal household which succeeded to that estate, thus becoming Parūr Svarupakkar.

4. Padamangalam and Tamil Padam were not originally Nâyars, but immigrants from the Tamil

564 country. They are confined to a few localities in [184] Travancore, and until recently there was a distinctive difference in regard to dress and ornaments between the [463] Tamil Padam and the ordinary Nāyars. The occupation of the Padamangalakkar is temple service, such as sweeping, carrying lamps during processions, etc. The Tamil Padakkar are believed to have taken to various kinds of occupation, and, for this reason, to have become merged with other sections.

5. Vāthi or Vātti.—This name is not found in the Jatinirnaya, probably because it had not been differentiated from Mārān. The word is a corruption of vāzhti, meaning praying for happiness, and refers to their [534] traditional occupation. They use a peculiar drum, called nantuni. Some call themselves Daivampatis, or wards of God, and follow the makkathāyam system of inheritance (in the male line).

6. Itacheri or Idacheri, also called Pantaris in [234] South Travancore. They are herdsmen, and vendors of milk, butter and curds. The name suggests a relation of some kind to the Idaiyan caste of the Tamil country.

7. Karuvelam, known also by other names, such as [644] Kappiyara and Tiruvattar. Their occupation is service in the palace of the Mahārāja, and they are the custodians of his treasury and valuables. Fifty-two families are believed to have been originally brought from Kolathanād, when a member thereof was adopted into the Travancore royal family.

8. Arikuravan.—A name, meaning those who reduced the quantity of rice out of the paddy given to them to husk at the temple of Kazhayakkuttam near Trivandrum, by which they were accosted by the local chieftain.

9. Pallichchan.—Bearers of palanquins for Brāhmans and Malabar chieftains. They are also employed

as their attendants, to carry their sword and shield 564
before them.

10. Vandikkāran.—A name, meaning cartmen, for those who supply fuel to temples, and cleanse the vessels belonging thereto.

11. Kuttina.—The only heiress of a Svarupam tarwad is said to have been a maid-servant in the Vadakketam Brāhman's house, and her daughter's tālikettu ceremony to have been celebrated in her master's newly-built cowshed. The bride was called kuttilachchi, or bride in a cowshed, and her descendants were named
Kuttina Nāyars. They intermarry among themselves, [783]
and, having no priests of their own, obtain purified water [793]
from Brāhmans to remove the effects of pollution.

12. Matavar.—Also known as Puliyattu, Veliyattu, and Kāllur Nāyars. They are believed to have been good archers in former times.

13. Otatu, also called Kusa. Their occupation is to tile or thatch temples and Brāhman houses.

14. Mantalayi.—A tract of land in the Kalkulam taluk, called Mantalachchi Konam, was granted to them
by the State. They are paid mourners, and attend at [765]
the Trivandrum palace when a death occurs in the royal family.

15. Manigrāmam.—Believed to represent Hindu [797]
recoveries from early conversion to Christianity. Manigrāmam was a portion of Cranganore, where early Christian immigrants settled.

16. Vattaykkatan, better known in Travancore as Chakala Nāyars, form in many respects the lowest sub-division. They are obliged to stand outside the sacrificial stones (balikallu) of a sanctuary, and are not allowed to take the title Pillai. Pulva is a title of distinction among them. One section of them is engaged

in the hereditary occupation of oil-pressing, and occupies a lower position in the social scale than the other."

The following list of "clans" among the Nāyars of Malabar whom he examined anthropometrically is given by Mr. F. Fawcett * :—

Kiriyattil.
Sudra.
Kurup.
Nambiyar.
Urāli.
Nalliōden.
Viyyūr.
Akattu Charna.
Purattu Charna.
Vattakkād.
Vangilōth.
Kitavu.
Pallichan.
Muppathināyiran.
Viyapāri or Ravari.
Attikurissi.
Manavalan.
Adungādi.
Adiōdi.
Amayengolam.

"The Kurup, Nambiyar Viyyūr, Manavālan, Vengōlan, Nelliōden, Adungādi, Kitāvu, Adiōdi, Āmayengolam, all superior clans, belong, properly speaking, to North Malabar. The Kiriyattil, or Kiriyam, is the highest of all the clans in South Malabar, and is supposed to comprise, or correspond with the group of clans first named from North Malabar. The Akattu Charna clan is divided into two sub-clans, one of which looks to the Zamorin as their lord, and the other owns lordship to minor lordlings, as the Tirumulpād of Nilambūr. The former are superior, and a woman of the latter may mate with a man of the former, but not *vice versâ*. In the old days, every Nāyar chief had his Charnavar, or adherents. The Purattu Charna are the outside adherents, or fighters and so on, and the Akattu Charna are the inside adherents—clerks and domestics. The clan from which the former were drawn is superior to the latter. The Urālis are said to have been masons; the Pallichans manchil bearers.* The Sūdra clan supplies female servants in the houses of Nambūdiris. 564 The Vattakkād (or Chakkingal : [258] chakku, oil press) clan, whose proper *métier* is producing gingelly or cocoanut oil with the oil-mill, is the lowest of all, excepting, I think, the Pallichan. Indeed, in [553] North Malabar, I have frequently been told by Nāyars of the superior clans that they do not admit the Vattakkād to be Nāyars, and say that they have adopted the honorary affix Nāyar to their names quite recently." There is some obscurity as regards the sub-divisions of the Vattakkād clan. To the north of Calicut, in Kurumbranād, they are divided into the Undiātuna, or those who pull (to work the oil-machine by hand), and the Murivechchu-ātune, or those who tie or fasten bullocks, to work the oil-machine. Yet further north, at Tellicherry and thereabouts, there are no known sub-divisions, while in Ernād, to the eastward, the clan is divided into the Veluttātu (white) and Karuttātu (black). The white have nothing to do with the [258] expression and preparation of oil, which is the hereditary [264] occupation of the black. The white may eat with Nāyars of any clan ; the black can eat with no others outside their own clan. The black sub-clan is strictly endogamous ; the other, the superior sub-clan, is not. Their women may marry men of any other clan, the Pallichchan excepted. Union by marriage, or whatever the function may be named, is permissible between most of the other clans, the rule by which a woman may never unite herself with her inferior being always observed. She may unite herself with a man of her own clan, or with a man of any superior clan, or with a Nambūtiri, an Embrāntiri, or any other Brāhman,

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* Madras Museum Bull., III, 3, 1901.

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* A manchil is a conveyance carried on men's shoulders, and more like a [40

564 or with one of the small sects coming between the
Brāhmans and the Nāyars. But she cannot under any
circumstances unite herself with a man of a clan, which
[264] is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with those of a clan
inferior to her ; a man may, and does without restriction.
564 Her children by an equal in race and not only in mere
651 social standing, but never those by one who is racially
613 inferior, belong to her taravād.* The children of the
inferior mothers are never brought into the taravād of
the superior fathers, *i.e.*, they are never brought into it
to belong to it, but they may live there. And, where
they do so, they cannot enter the taravād kitchen, or
touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they
allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live
in the taravād under these and other disabilities, but
557 are never of it. The custom, which permits a man
564 to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than
831 himself, and prohibits a woman from exercising the
same liberty, is called the rule of anulōmam and prati-
lōmam. Dr. Gundert derives anulōmam from anu, with
lōmam (rômam), hair, or going with the hair or grain.
So pratilômam means going against the hair or grain.
According to this usage, a Nāyar woman, consorting
with a man of a higher caste, follows the hair, purifies
the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation.
558 By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan)
564 or caste, she is guilty of pratilōmam, and, if the
831 difference of caste were admittedly great, she would
be turned out of her family, to prevent the whole
564 family being boycotted. A corollary of this custom
851 is that a Nambūtiri Brāhman father cannot touch his
783 own children by his Nāyar consort without bathing

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* Tarwād or taravād, a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor.

823
has been explained to me as emanating from a command 784
of the Kōlatirri Rājah in days gone by, when, the Arabs 562
having come to the country about Calicut, there was a
chance of the women being seized and taken as wives.
The explanation is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition
to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to have
originated in much the same way. As bearing on this
point, I may mention that the Nāyar women living to
the east of Calicut cannot cross the river backwater, and
come into the town." It may be noted in this connection [776
that the Paikāra river on the Nīlgiri hills is sacred to the
Todas, and, for fear of mishap from arousing the wrath [843
of the river-god, a pregnant Toda woman will not venture
to cross it. No Toda will use the river water for any
purpose, and they do not touch it, unless they have to
ford it. They then walk through it, and, on reaching
the opposite bank, bow their heads. Even when they
walk over the Paikāra bridge, they take their hands out
of the putkuli (body-cloth) as a mark of respect.

The complexity of the sub-divisions among the 564
Nāyars in North Malabar is made manifest by the
following account thereof in the Gazetteer of Malabar.
"There are exogamous sub-divisions (perhaps corre- [613]
sponding to original tarwāds) called kulams, and these
are grouped to form the sub-castes which are usually
endogamous. It is quite impossible to attempt a com- 564
plete account of the scheme, but to give some idea of its 634
nature one example may be taken, and dealt with in some
detail ; and for this purpose the portion of Kurumbranād
known as Payyanād will serve. This is the country [644
between the Kōttapuzha and Pōrapuzha rivers, and is
said to have been given by a Rāja of Kurumbranād to a
certain Ambādi Kōvilagam Tamburātti (the stānam or
title of the senior lady of the Zāmorin Rāja's family). In

afterwards to remove pollution. The children in the 564
marumakkatayam family belong, of course, to their 851
mother's family, clan, and caste. They are Nāyars, not 783
Nambūtiris. The Nāyars of North Malabar are held to
be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those 564
of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the
river Korapuzha, seven miles north of Calicut, so that a
woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a
man of her own clan name of South Malabar. A Nāyar
woman of North Malabar cannot pass northward beyond
the frontier; she cannot pass the hills to the eastward; [484]
and she cannot cross the Korapuzha to the south. It is [784]
tabu. The women of South Malabar are similarly con- [562]
fined by custom, breach of which involves forfeiture of
caste. To this rule there is an exception, and of late 564
years the world has come in touch with the Malayāli, 562
who nowadays goes to the University, studies medicine 178
and law in the Presidency town (Madras), or even in far 484
off England. Women of the relatively inferior Akattu
Charna clan are not under quite the same restrictions as
regards residence as are those of most of the other clans;
so, in these days of free communications, when Malayālis
travel, and frequently reside far from their own country,
they often prefer to select wives from this Akattu Charna
clan. But the old order changeth everywhere, and nowadays
Malayālis who are in the Government service, and
obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who
have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have
wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and
taken with them their wives who are of clans other than
the Akattu Charna. The interdiction to travel, and the
possible exception to it in the case of Akattu Charna
women, has been explained to me in this way. The 841
Nāyar woman observes pollution for three days during 783
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564
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841 menstruation. While in her period, she may not eat or
783 drink with any other member of the taravād, and on the
[613] fourth day she must be purified. Purification is known
as māttu (change), and it is effected by the washerwoman,
who, in some parts of South Malabar, is of the Mannān
or Vannān caste, whose *métier* is to wash for the Nāyars
and Nambūtiris, but who is, as a rule, the washerwoman
of the Tīyan caste, giving her, after her bath, one of her
own cloths to wear (māttu, change of raiment) instead of
the soiled cloth, which she takes away to wash. Pollution,
which may come through a death in the family,
through child-birth, or menstruation, must be removed
by māttu. Until it is done, the woman is out of caste.
It must be done in the right way at the right moment,
under pain of the most unpleasant social consequences.
[659] How that the influential rural local magnate wreaks
[613] vengeance on a taravād by preventing the right person
giving māttu to the women is well known in Malabar.
He could not, with all the sections of the Penal Code at
his disposal, inflict greater injury. Now the Nāyar
woman is said to feel compelled to remain in Malabar,
or within her own part of it, in order to be within reach
of māttu. My informant tells me that, the Vannān
caste being peculiar to Malabar, the Nāyar women
cannot go where these are not to be found, and that
māttu must be done by one of that caste. But I know,
from my own observation in the most truly conservative
localities, in Kurumbranād for example, where the Nāyar
has a relative superiority, that the washerman is as a
rule a Tīyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction
823 has other roots than those involved in māttu. It does
784 not account for the superstition against crossing water,
562 which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world. The
origin of the interdiction to cross the river southwards

has been explained to me as emanating from a command 823
of the Kōlatirri Rājah in days gone by, when, the Arabs 784
having come to the country about Calicut, there was a 562
chance of the women being seized and taken as wives.
The explanation is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition
to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to have
originated in much the same way. As bearing on this
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the east of Calicut cannot cross the river backwater, and
come into the town." It may be noted in this connection [776]
that the Paikāra river on the Nīlgiri hills is sacred to the [843]
Todas, and, for fear of mishap from arousing the wrath
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title of the senior lady of the Zāmorin Rāja's family). In

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Nayar

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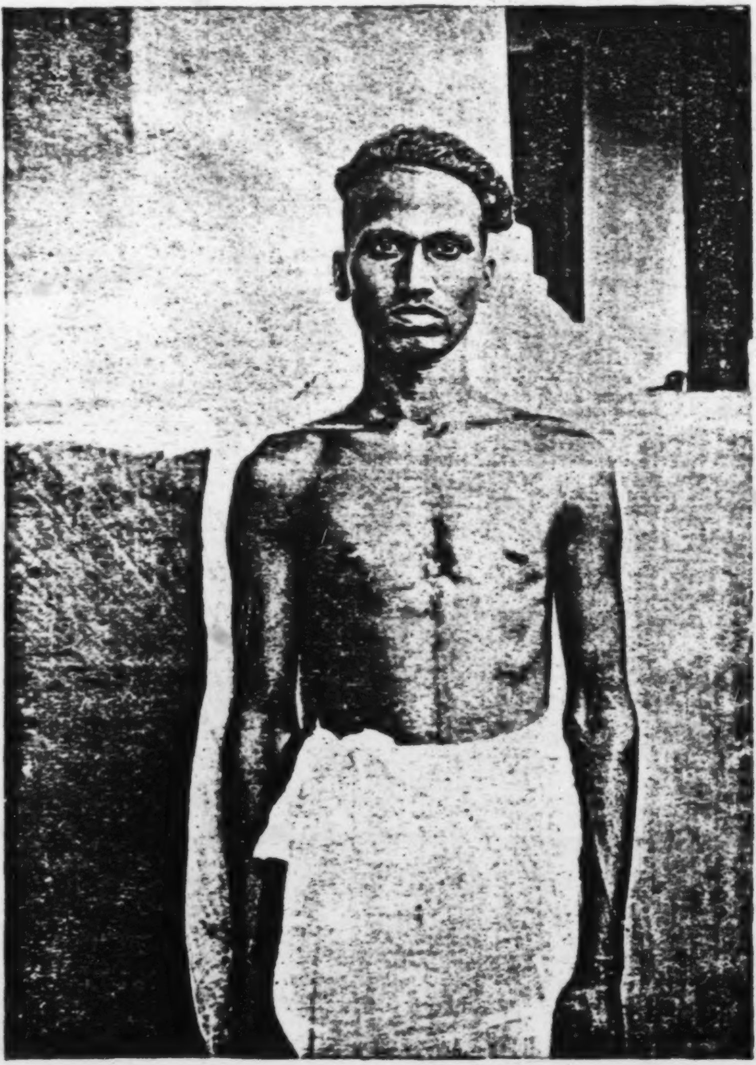

AKATTUCHARNA NĀYAR

[Facing p. 305]

564 634 this tract or nād there were originally six stānis or chieftains, who ruled, under the Rāja, with the assistance, or subject to the constitutional control, of four assemblies of Nāyars called Kūttams. Each kūttam had its hereditary president. In this tract there are seven groups of kulams. The highest includes twelve kulams, Vengalat, Pattillat, Vīyyūr, Nelliōt, Atunkudi, Amayangalat, Nellōli, Nilanchēri, Rendillat, Pulliyāni, Orakātteri, and [553] Venmēri. Of these, the Pattillat and Rendillat (members of the ten and members of the two illams or houses) affix the title Adiyōdi to their names, the last three affix the title Nambiyar, and the rest affix Nāyar. Of the six stānis already mentioned, three, with the title of Adiyōdi, belong to the Vengalat kulam, while two of the presidents of kuttams belonged to the Pattillat kulam. The younger members of the stāni houses are called kidavu. It is the duty of women of Viyyūr and Nelliōt kulams to join in the bridal procession of members of the Vengalat kulam, the former carrying lamps, and the latter salvers containing flowers, while the Rendillat Adiyōdis 564 furnish cooks to the same class. Pattillat Adiyōdis 783 and Orakātteri Nambiyars observe twelve days' pollution, while all the other kulams observe fifteen. The second group consists of six kulams, Eravattūr, Ara-Eravattūr (or half Eravattūr), and Attikōdan Nāyars, Tonderi Kidāvus, Punnan Nambiyars, and Mēnōkkis. All these observe fifteen days' pollution. The third group consists of three kulams, Tacchōli to which the remaining three stānis belong, Kōthōli, and Kuruvattān- [553] chēri. All affix Nāyar to their names, and observe fifteen days' pollution. The fourth group consists of three kulams, Peruvānian Nambiyars, Chellādan Nāyars, [643] and Vennapālan Nāyars. All three observe fifteen days' pollution. The name Peruvānian means great or

principal oil-man ; and it is the duty of this caste to 564
present the Kurumbranād Rāja with oil on the occasion 783
of his formal installation. The fifth group consists of the [643]
three kulams, Mannangazhi, Paramchela, and Pallikara
Nāyars, all observing fifteen days' pollution. A member 564
of the first-named class has to place an āmanapalaga [643]
(the traditional seat of Nambūdiris and other high castes)
for the Kurumbranād Rāja to sit on at the time of
his installation, while a member of the second has to
present him with a cloth on the same occasion. The
sixth group consists of four kiriyams named Patam,
Tulu, Manan, and Ottu respectively, and has the collective
name of Rāvāri. The seventh group consists
of six kulams, Kandōn, Kannankōdan, Kotta, Karumba,
Kundakollavan, and Panakādan Nāyars. All observe [783]
fifteen days' pollution, and the women of these six
kulams have certain duties to perform in connection with [841]
the purification of women of the Vengalat, Paṭtillat, and
Orakatteri kulams. Besides these seven groups, there
are a few other classes without internal sub-divisions.
One such class is known as Pāppini Nāyar. A woman
of this class takes the part of the Brāhmini woman
(Nambissan) at the tāli-kettu kalyanam of girls belonging
to the kulams included in the third group. Another
class called Pālattavan takes the place of the Attikurissi
Nāyar at the funeral ceremonies of the same three
kulams."

In illustration of the custom of polyandry among the 595
Nāyars of Malabar in by-gone days, the following
extracts may be quoted. "On the continent of India,"
it is recorded in Ellis' edition of the Kural, "polyandry
is still said to be practiced in Orissa, and among particular
tribes in other parts. In Malayālam, as is well known,
the vision of Plato in his ideal republic is more completely

595 realised, the women among the Nāyars not being [585] restricted to family or number, but, after she has been consecrated by the usual rites before the nuptial fire, in which ceremony any indifferent person may officiate as the representative of her husband, being in her intercourse with the other sex only restrained by her inclinations; provided that the male with whom she associates be of an equal or superior tribe. But it must be stated, for the glory of the female character, that, notwithstanding the latitude thus given to the Nāyattis, and that they are thus left to the guidance of their own free will and the play of their own fancy (which in other countries has not always been found the most efficient check on the conduct of either sex), it rarely happens that they cohabit with more than one person at the same 586 time. Whenever the existing connexion is broken, whether from incompatibility of temper, disgust, caprice, or any of the thousand vexations by which from the frailty of nature domestic happiness is liable to be disturbed, the woman seeks another lover, the man 587 another mistress. But it mostly happens that the bond of paternity is here, as elsewhere, too strong to be shaken off, and that the uninfluenced and uninterested union of love, when formed in youth, continues even in the decline of age."

595 In a note on the Nāyars in the sixteenth century, [20.] Cæsar Fredericke writes as follows.* "These Nairi having their wives common amongst themselves, and when any of them goe into the house of any of these women, he leaveth his sworde and target at the door, and the time that he is there, there dare not be any so

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* The Voyage and Travell of M. Cæsar Fredericke, Merchant of Venice, into the East Indies and beyond the Indies (1563). Translation. Hakluyt Voyages, V, 394.

hardie as to come into that house. The king's children 595 shall not inherite the kingdom after their father, because [201] they hold this opinion, that perchance they were not begotten of the king their father, but of some other man, therefore they accept for their king one of the sonnes of the king's sisters, or of some other woman of the blood roiall, for that they be sure that they are of the blood roiall."

In his "New Account of the East Indies, (1727)" 595 Hamilton wrote: "The husbands," of whom, he said, 833 there might be twelve, but no more at one time, "agree very well, for they cohabit with her in their turns, according to their priority of marriage, ten days more or less according as they can fix a term among themselves, and he that cohabits with her maintains her in all things necessary for his time, so that she is plentifully provided for by a constant circulation. When the man that cohabits with her goes into her house he leaves his arms at the door, and none dare remove them or enter the house on pain of death. When she [428] proves with child, she nominates its father, who takes care of his education after she has suckled it, and brought it to walk or speak, but the children are never heirs to their father's estate, but the father's sister's children are."

Writing in the latter half of the eighteenth century, 595 Grose says * that "it is among the Nairs that principally prevails the strange custom of one wife being common to a number; in which point the great power of custom [152] is seen from its rarely or never producing any jealousies or quarrels among the co-tenants of the same woman. Their number is not so much limited by any specific

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* Travels to the East Indies.

595 law as by a kind of tacit convention, it scarcely ever happening that it exceeds six or seven. The woman, however, is under no obligation to admit above a single attachment, though not less respected for using her [201] privilege to its utmost extent. If one of the husbands happens to come to the house when she is employed with another, he knows that circumstance by certain signals left at the door that his turn is not come, and 564 departs very resignedly." Writing about the same time, 595 Sonnerat * says that "these Brāhmans do not marry, but have the privilege of enjoying all the Nairesses. [648] This privilege the Portuguese who were esteemed as a great caste, obtained and preserved, till their drunkenness and debauchery betrayed them into a commerce with all sorts of women. The following right is established by the customs of the country. A woman without [851] shame may abandon herself to all men who are not of an [604] inferior caste to her own, because the children (notwithstanding what Mr. de Voltaire says) do not belong to the father, but to the mother's brother; they become his legitimate heirs at their birth, even of the crown if he is king." In his 'Voyages and Travels', Kerr writes as follows. † "By the laws of their country these Nayres cannot marry, so that no one has any certain or acknowledged son or father; all their children being born of mistresses, with each of whom three or four Nayres cohabit by agreement among themselves. Each one of this cofraternity dwells a day in his turn with the joint mistress, counting from noon of one day to the same time of the next, after which he departs, and another

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* Voyage to the East Indies, 1774 and 1781.

† R. Kerr. General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1811, History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese between the years 1497 and 1525, from the original Portuguese of Herman Lopes de Castaneda.

comes for the like time. Thus they spend their time 595
without the care or trouble of wives and children, yet 564
maintain their mistresses well according to their rank.
Any one may forsake his mistress at his pleasure; and,
in like manner, the mistress may refuse admittance to
any one of her lovers when she pleases. These mistresses
are all gentlewomen of the Nayre caste, and the Nayres,
besides being prohibited from marrying, must not attach
themselves to any woman of a different rank. Consider- [851]
ing that there are always several men attached to one [604]
woman, the Nayres never look upon any of the children
born of their mistresses as belonging to them, however
strong a resemblance may subsist, and all inheritances
among the Nayres go to their brothers, or the sons of
their sisters, born of the same mothers, all relationship
being counted only by female consanguinity and descent.
This strange law prohibiting marriage was established
that they might have neither wives nor children on
whom to fix their love and attachment; and that, being
free from all family cares, they might more willingly
devote themselves entirely to warlike service." The [578]
term son of ten fathers is used as a term of abuse
among Nāyars to this day.* Tīpū Sultān is said to
have issued the following proclamation to the Nāyars,
on the occasion of his visit to Calicut in 1788. "And, [648]
since it is a practice with you for one woman to
associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers
and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and
are thence all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts of the field; I
hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices, and
live like the rest of mankind." †

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* Wigram, Malabar Law and Custom, Ed. 1900.

† T. A. Kalyanakrishna Aiyar, Malabar Quart. Review, II, 1903.

595 As to the present existence or non-existence of
polyandry I must call recent writers into the witness-box.
The Rev. S. Mateer, Mr. Fawcett writes,* "informed me
ten years ago—he was speaking of polyandry among the
Nāyars of Travancore—that he had 'known an instance
of six brothers keeping two women, four husbands to one,
and two to the other. In a case where two brothers
[797] cohabited with one woman, and one was converted to
[177] Christianity, the other brother was indignant at the
Christian's refusal to live any longer in this condition.'
I have not known an admitted instance of polyandry
amongst the Nāyars of Malabar at the present day, but
there is no doubt that, if it does not exist now (and I
think it does here and there), it certainly did not long
[564] ago." Mr. Gopal Panikkar says † that "to enforce this
social edict upon the Nairs, the Brāhmans made use
of the powerful weapon of their aristocratic ascendancy
in the country, and the Nairs readily submitted to
the Brāhman supremacy. Thus it came about that the
custom of concubinage, so freely indulged in by the
Brāhmans with Nair women, obtained such firm hold upon
the country that it has only been strengthened by the
lapse of time. At the present day there are families,
especially in the interior of the district, who look upon it
as an honour to be thus united with Brāhmans. But a
(178) reaction has begun to take place against this feeling,
and Brāhman alliances are invariably looked down upon
in respectable Nair tarwads. This reactionary feeling
took shape in the Malabar Marriage Act." Mr. Justice
K. Narayana Marar says: "There is nothing strange
or to be ashamed of in the fact that the Nāyars were
originally of a stock that practiced polyandry, nor if the

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[*] *Op. cit.*

[†] Malabar and its Folk, 1900.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909

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Nayar

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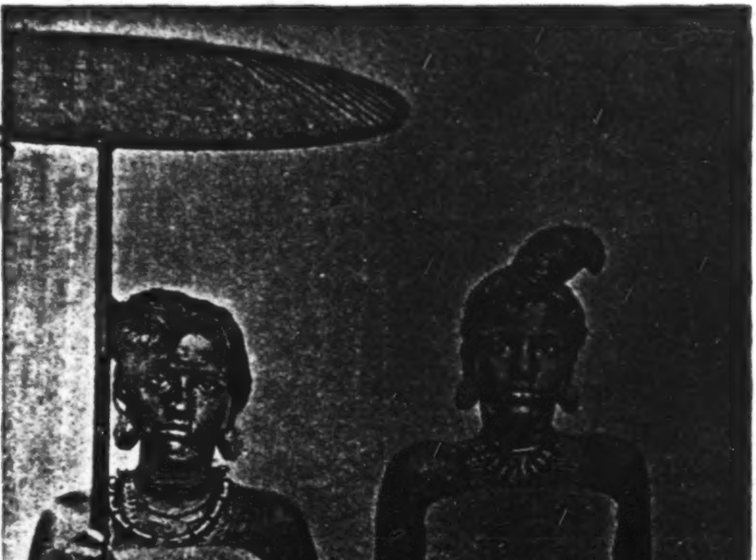

NĀYAR FEMALES.

[facing P. 312]

practice continued till recently. Hamilton and Buchanan 595
say that, among the Nāyars of Malabar, a woman has several husbands, but these are not brothers. These travellers came to Malābar in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is no reason whatever to suppose that they were not just recording what they saw. For I am not quite sure whether, even now, the practice is not lurking in some remote nooks and corners of the country." Lastly, Mr. Wigram writes as follows.* "Polyandry may now [851]
be said to be dead, and, although the issue of a Nāyar [581]
marriage are still children of their mother rather than of their father, marriage may be defined as a contract based on mutual consent, and dissoluble at will. It has been well said (by Mr. Logan) that nowhere is the marriage tie, albeit informal, more rigidly observed or respected than it is in Malabar: nowhere is it more jealously guarded, or its neglect more savagely avenged."

In connection with the tāli-kattu kalyānam, or tāli- 588
tying marriage, Mr. Fawcett writes that "the details of [184]
this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar, but the [881]
ceremony in some form is essential, and must be performed for every Nāyar girl before she attains puberty." For an account of this ceremony, I must resort, to the evidence of Mr. K. R. Krishna Menon before the Malabar Marriage Commission.†

"The tāli-kattu kalyānam is somewhat analogous to what a dēva-dāsi (dancing-girl) of other countries (districts) undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal families, and those of certain Edaprabhus, a Kshatriya, and among the Charna sect a Nedungādi is

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* Malabar Law and Custom, 1882.

† Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, 1894.

578 invited to the girl's house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and, in the presence of friends and castemen, ties a tāli (marriage badge) round her neck, and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble. [787] Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined along with those of her enangan (a recognised member of one's own class) families, and the boy whose horoscope is found to agree with hers is marked out as a fit person to tie the tāli, and a day is fixed for the tāli-tying ceremony by the astrologer, and information given to the Karanavan * (senior male in a tarwad) of the boy's family. The feast is called ayaniunu, and the boy is thenceforth called Manavālan or Pillai (bridegroom). From the house in which the Manavālan is entertained a procession is formed, preceded by men with swords, and [613] shields shouting a kind of war-cry. In the meantime a procession starts from the girl's house, with similar men and cries, and headed by a member of her tarwad, to meet the other procession, and, after meeting the Manavālan, he escorts him to the girl's house. After entering the booth erected for the purpose, he is conducted to a seat of honour, and his feet are washed by the brother of the girl, who receives a pair of cloths. The Manavālan is then taken to the centre of the booth, where bamboo mats, carpets and white cloths are spread, and seated there. The brother of the girl then carries her from inside the house, and, after going round the booth three times, places her at the left side of the Manavālan. The father of the girl then presents new cloths tied in a kambli (blanket) to the pair, and with this [613] new cloth (called manthravadi) they change their dress. [584] The wife of the Karanavan of the girl's tarwad, if she be

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* The rights and obligations of Karanavans are fully dealt with by Moore, Malabar Law and Custom, 3rd edition, 1905.

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of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting [613]
on anklets, etc. The purōhit (officiating priest) called [564]
Elayath (a low class of Brāhmans) then gives the tāli [793]
to the Mānavālan, and 'the family astrologer shouts [787]
muhurtham (auspicious hour), and the Manavālan,
putting his sword on the lap, ties the tāli round the
neck of the girl, who is then required to hold an
arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families [556]
a Brāhmani sings certain songs intended to bless the [533]
couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her
presence, a Nāyar, versed in songs, performs the office.
The boy and girl are then carried by enangans to [783]
a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house,
where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution
for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in
some neighbouring tank (pond) or river, holding each
other's hands. After changing their clothes they come
home, preceded by a procession. Tom-toms (native [534]
drums) and elephants usually form part of the procession, [231]
and turmeric water is sprinkled. When they come
home, all doors of the house are shut, and the Manavālan is
required to force them open. He then enters the house,
and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt
and female friends of the girl then approach, and give
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the [264]
boy, and, after taking their meal together from the same
leaf, they proceed to the booth, where a cloth is severed
into two parts, and each part given to the Manavālan
and girl separately in the presence of enangans and
friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to [586]
constitute a divorce." "The tearing of the cloth," [184]
Mr. Fawcett writes, "is confined to South Malabar.
These are the essentials of the ceremony, an adjunct to [765]
which is that, in spite of the divorce, the girl observes

588 death pollution when her Manavālan dies. The same
[765] Manavālan may tie the tāli on any number of girls,
during the same ceremony or at any other time, and he
[793] may be old or young. He is often an elderly holy Brāh-
[564] man, who receives a small present for his services. The
girl may remove the tāli, if she likes, after the fourth day.
[184] In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the
man who performs the rôle of Manavālan is considered
to have some right to the girl, but in such case it has
been already considered that he is a proper man to enter
into sambandham with her."

588 Of the tāli-kattu kalyānam in Malabar, the following
184 detailed account, mainly furnished by an Urāli Nāyar of
Calicut, is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "An
auspicious time has to be selected for the purpose, and
the preliminary consultation of the astrologer is in itself
the occasion of a family gathering. The Manavālan or
quasi-bridegroom is chosen at the same time. For the
actual kalyānam, two pandals (booths), a small one
inside a large one, are erected in front of the padinhātta
macchu or central room of the western wing. They are
decorated with cloth, garlands, lamps and palm leaves,
and the pillars should be of areca palm cut by an Asāri
[778] on Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday. The first day's
ceremonies open with a morning visit to the temple,
[789] where the officiating Brāhman pours water sanctified by
mantrams (religious formulæ), and the addition of leaves
of mango, peepul and darbha, over the girl's head. This
[354] rite is called kalasam maduga. The girl then goes home,
and is taken to the macchu, where a hanging lamp
with five wicks is lighted. This should be kept alight
[352] during all the days of the kalyānam. The girl sits on a
[824] piece of pala (*Alstonia scholaris*) wood, which is called
[301] a mana. She is elaborately adorned, and some castes

consider a coral necklace an essential. In her right 588
hand she holds a vâlkannâdi (brass hand mirror), and in 184
her left a charakkal (a highly ornate arrow). In front of [301]
the girl are placed, in addition to the five-wicked lamp and nirachaveppu, a metal dish or talam of parched rice, and the eight lucky things known as ashtamangalyam. A woman, termed Brahmini or Pushpini, usually of the Nambissan caste, sits facing her on a three-legged stool (pidam), and renders appropriate and lengthy songs, at the close of which she scatters rice over her. About midday there is a feast, and in the evening songs in the macchu are repeated. Next morning, the ceremonial in the macchu is repeated for the third time, after which the paraphernalia are removed to the nearest tank or to the east of the household well, where the Pushpini sings once more, goes through the form of making the girl's toilet, and ties a cocoanut frond round each of her wrists (kappōla). The girl has then to rise and jump over a kindi (vessel) of water with an unhusked cocoanut placed on the top, overturning it the third time. The party then proceed to the pandal, two men holding a scarlet cloth over the girl as a canopy, and a Châliyan (weaver) brings two cloths (kōdi vastiram), which the girl puts on. In the evening, the previous day's ceremonial is repeated in the macchu. The third day is the most important, and it is then that the central act of the ceremony is performed. For this the girl sits in the inner pandal richly adorned. In some cases she is carried from the house to the pandal by her karnavan or brother, who makes a number of pradakshinams round the pandal (usually 3 or 7) before he places her in her
seat. Before the girl are the various objects already [533]
specified, and the hymeneal ditties of the Pushpini open the proceedings. At the auspicious moment the

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184 Manavālan arrives in rich attire. He is often preceded
by a sort of body guard with sword and shield who utter
a curious kind of cry, and is met at the gate of the girl's
house by a bevy of matrons with lamps and salvers
decorated with flowers and lights, called talams. A man
of the girl's family washes his feet, and he takes his seat
in the pandal on the girl's right. Sometimes the girl's
father at this stage presents new cloths (mantravādi or
mantrokōdi) to the pair, who at once don them. The
girl's father takes the tāli, a small round plate of gold
about the size of a two-anna bit, with a hole at the top,
from the goldsmith who is in waiting, pays him for it,
[787] and gives it to the Manavālan. The karnavan or father
of the girl asks the astrologer thrice if the moment has
arrived, and, as he signifies his assent the third time, the
Manavālan ties the tāli round the girl's neck amidst the
shouts of those present. The Manavālan carries the girl
indoors to the macchu, and feasting brings the day to
[533] a close. Tom-toming and other music are of course
incessant accompaniments throughout as on other festal
occasions, and the women in attendance keep up a
curious kind of whistling, called kurava, beating their
lips with their fingers. On the fourth day, girl and
Manavālan go in procession to the temple richly dressed.
The boy, carrying some sort of sword and shield, heads
[782] the party. If the family be one of position, he and the
girl must be mounted on an elephant. Offerings are made
to the deity, and presents to the Brāhmans. They then
return home, and, as they enter the house, the Manavālan
who brings up the rear is pelted by the boys of the party
with plantains, which he wards off with his shield. In
other cases, he is expected to make a pretence of forcing
the door open. These two usages are no doubt to be
classed with those marriage ceremonies which take the

form of a contest between the bridegroom and the bride's 528 relatives, and which are symbolic survivals of marriage 184 by capture. The Manavâlan and the girl next partake of food together in the inner pandal—a proceeding which obviously corresponds to the ceremonious first meal of a newly-married couple. The assembled guests are lavishly [574] entertained. The chief Kovilagans and big Nâyar houses will feed 1,000 Brâhmans as well as their own relations, and spend anything up to ten or fifteen thousand rupees on the ceremony."

Concerning the tâli-kettu ceremony in Travancore Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "After the age of eleven, a Nâyar girl becomes too old for this ceremony, though, in some rare instances, it is celebrated after a girl attains her age. As among other castes, ages [801] represented by an odd number, *e.g.*, seven, nine, and eleven, have a peculiar auspiciousness attached to them. Any number of girls, even up to a dozen, may go through the ceremony at one time, and they may include infants under one year—an arrangement prompted by considerations of economy, and rendered possible by the fact that no civil or religious right or liability is contracted as between the parties. The duty of getting the girls of the tarwad 'married' devolves on the karanavaṉ, or in his default on the eldest brother, the father's obligation being discharged by informing him that the time for the ceremony has arrived. The masters of the ceremonies at [622] a Nâyar tâli-kettu in Travancore are called Machchampikkar, *i.e.*, men in the village, whose social status is equal to that of the tarwad in which the ceremony is to be celebrated. At a preliminary meeting of the Machchampikkar, the number of girls for whom the ceremony is to be performed, the bridegrooms, and other details are settled. The horoscopes are examined by the village [787]

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[787]

astrologer, and those youths in the tarwads who have passed the age of eighteen, and whose horoscopes agree with those of the girls, are declared to be eligible. The ola (palm-leaf) on which the Kaniyan (astrologer) writes his decision is called the muhurta charutu, and the individual who receives it from him is obliged to see that the ceremony is performed on an auspicious day in the near future. The next important item is the fixing of a wooden post in the south-west corner or kannimula of the courtyard. At the construction of the pandal (booth) the Pidakakkar or villagers render substantial aid. The mandapa is decorated with ears of corn, and hence called katirmandapa. It is also called mullapandal. On the [533] night of the previous day the kalati or Brâhman's song is sung. A sumptuous banquet, called ayaniunnu, is given at the girl's house to the party of the young man. The ceremony commences with the bridegroom washing his feet, and taking his seat within the pandal. The girl meanwhile bathes, worships the household deity, and is dressed in new cloths and adorned with costly ornaments. A Brâhman woman ties a thread round the girl's left wrist, and sings a song called Subhadraveli, which deals with the marriage by capture of Subhadra by Arjuna. Then, on the invitation of the girl's mother, who throws a garland round his neck, the bridegroom goes in procession, riding on an elephant, or on foot. The girl's brother is waiting to receive him at the pandal. A leading villager is presented with some money, as if to recompense him for the permission granted by him to commence the ceremony. The girl sits within the mandapa, facing the east, with her eyes closed. The bridegroom, on his arrival, sits on her right. He then receives the minnu (ornament) from the Ilayatu priest, and ties it round the girl's neck. A song is sung called

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909

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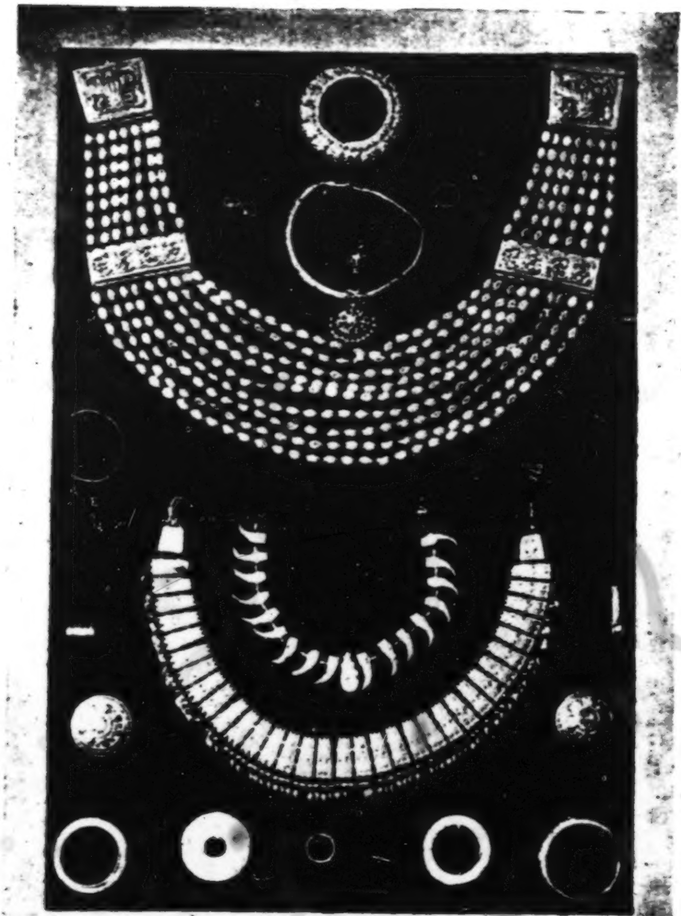

NÂYAR JEWELRY.

[Facing p. 320]

A song is sung called ammachampattu, or the song of the maternal uncle. If 588 there are several brides, they sit in a row, each holding 184 in her hand an arrow and a looking-glass, and the [533] ornaments are tied on their necks in the order of their ages. Unless enangans are employed, there is usually only one tāli-tier, whatever may be the number of girls. In cases where, owing to poverty, the expenses of the ceremony cannot be borne, it is simply performed in front of a Brāhman temple, or in the pandaramatam, or house of the village chieftain. In many North Travancore taluks the girl removes her tali as soon as she hears of the tali-tier's death." It is noted by the Rev. S. Mateer[*] that " a Nair girl of Travancore must get married with the tāli before the age of eleven to avoid reproach from friends and neighbours. In case of need a sword may even be made to represent a bridegroom." Sometimes, when a family is poor, the girl's mother makes an idol of clay, adorns it with flowers, and invests her daughter with the tāli in the presence of the idol.

In an account of the tali-kettu ceremony, in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, it is stated that " the celebration of the ceremony is costly, and advantage is therefore taken of a single occasion in the course of ten or twelve years, at which all girls in a family, irrespective of their ages, and, when parties agree, all girls belonging to families that observe death pollution between one another go through the ceremony. The ceremony opens with the fixing of a post for the construction of a pandal or shed, which is beautifully decorated with cloth, pictures and festoons. The male members of the village are [574] invited, and treated to a feast followed by the distribution

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[*] Journ. Anthrop. Inst., XII, 1883.

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184 of pān-supāri. Every time that a marriage ceremony is [574] celebrated, a member of the family visits His Highness the Rāja with presents, and solicits his permission for the celebration. Such presents are often made to the Nambūdri Jenmis (landlords), by their tenants, and by [424] castes attached to illams. It may be noted that certain [643] privileges, such as sitting on a grass mat, having an elephant procession, drumming, firing of pop-guns, etc., have often to be obtained from the Ruler of the State. The marriage itself begins with the procession to the marriage pandal with the eight auspicious things (ashtamangalyam) and pattiniruththal (seating for song), at the latter of which a Brāhmini or Pushpini sings certain songs based upon suitable Purānic texts. The girls and other female members of the family, dressed in gay attire and decked with costly ornaments, come out in procession to the pandal, where the Pushpini sings, with tom-toms and the firing of pop-guns at intervals. After three, five, or seven rounds of this, a cutting of the jasmine placed in a brass pot is carried on an elephant by the Elayad or family priest to the nearest Bhagavati temple, where it is planted on the night previous to the ceremonial day with tom-toms, fireworks, and joyous shouts of men and women. A few hours before the auspicious moment for the ceremony, this cutting is [782] brought back. Before the tāli is tied, the girls are brought out of the room, and, either from the ground itself or from a raised platform, beautifully decorated with festoons, etc., are made to worship the sun. The bridegroom, a Tirumulpād or an enangan, is then brought into the house with sword in hand, with tom-toms, firing of pop-guns, and shouts of joy. At the gate he is received by a few female members with ashtamangalyam in their hands, and seated on a bench or

stool in the pandal. A male member of the family, 588 generally a brother or maternal uncle of the girl, washes 184 the feet of the bridegroom. The girls are covered with new cloths of cotton or silk, and brought into the pandal, and seated screened off from one another. After the [431] distribution of money presents to the Brâhmans and the Elayad, the latter hands over the tâli, or thin plate of gold shaped like the leaf of aswatha (*Ficus religiosa*), and tacked on to a string, to the Tirumulpâd, who ties it round the neck of the girl. A single Tirumulpâd often ties the tâli round the neck of two, three, or four girls. He is given one to eight rupees per girl for so doing. Sometimes the tâli is tied by the mother of the girl. The retention of the tâli is not at all obligatory, nay it is seldom worn or taken care of after the ceremony. These circumstances clearly show the purely ceremonial character of this form of marriage. The Karamel Asan, or headman of the village, is an important factor on this occasion. In a conspicuous part of the marriage pandal [622] he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which a grass mat, a black blanket, and white cloth are spread one over the other. Before the tâli is tied, his permission is solicited for the performance of the ceremony. He is paid 4, 8, 16, 32 or 64 puthans (a puthan = 10 pies) per girl, according to the means of the family. He is also given rice, curry stuff, and pân-supâri. Rose-water is sprinkled at intervals on the males and females assembled on the occasion. With the distribution of 574 pân-supâri, scented sandal paste and jasmine flowers to 588 the females of the village and wives of relatives and 184 friends, who are invited for the occasion, these guests return to their homes. The male members, one or two from each family in the village, are then treated to a sumptuous feast. In some places, where the Enangu

588 system prevails, all members of such families, both male
184 and female, are also provided with meals. On the third
[574] day, the villagers are again entertained to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding, and on the fourth day the girls are taken out in procession for worship at the nearest temple amidst tom-toms and shouting. After this a feast is held, at which friends, relatives, and villagers are given a rich meal. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal and flowers, the invited guests depart.
[431] Presents, chiefly in money, are made to the eldest male member of the family by friends and relatives and villagers, and with this the ceremony closes. From the
[787] time of fixing the first pole for the pandal to the tying of the tāli, the village astrologer is in attendance on all ceremonial occasions, as he has to pronounce the auspicious moment for the performance of each item. During
[536] the four days of the marriage, entertainments, such as Kathakali drama or Ottan Tullal, are very common. When a family can ill-afford to celebrate the ceremony on any grand scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, or to the illam of a Nambūdri, if they happen to belong to sub-divisions attached to illams, and the tāli
[735] is tied with little or no feasting and merriment. In the northern taluks, the very poor people sometimes tie the tāli before the Trikkakkarappan on the Tiruvonam day."

An interesting account of the tāli-kettu ceremony is given by Duarte Barbosa, who writes as follows.* "After they are ten or twelve years old or more, their mothers perform a marriage ceremony for them in this manner. They advise the relations and friends that they may come to do honour to their daughters, and they beg some of their relations and friends to marry these 588 daughters, and they do so. It must be said that they 184 have some gold jewel made, which will contain half a ducat of gold, a little shorter than the tag of lace, with a hole in the middle passing through it, and they string it on a thread of white silk; and the mother of the girl stands with her daughter very much dressed out, and entertaining her with music and singing, and a number of people. And this relation or friend of hers comes with much earnestness, and there performs the ceremony of marriage, as though he married her, and they throw a gold chain round the necks of both of them together, and he puts the above mentioned jewel round her neck, which she always has to wear as a sign that she may now do what she pleases. And the bridegroom leaves her and goes away without touching her nor more to say to her on account of being her relation; and, if he is not so, he may remain with her if he wish it, but he is not bound to do so if he do not desire it. And from [833] that time forward the mother goes begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women."

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* *Op. cit.*

The tãli-kettu ceremony is referred to by Kerr, who, 588 in his translation of Castaneda, states that "these sisters of the Zamorin, and other kings of Malabar, have handsome allowances to live upon; and, when any of them reaches the age of ten, their kindred send for a young man of the Nâyar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin; after which he hangs a jewel round her neck, which she wears all the rest of her life, as a token that she is now at liberty to dispose of herself to anyone she pleases as long as she lives."

178 174 585 588 The opinion was expressed by Mr. (now Sir Henry) Winterbotham, one of the Malabar Marriage Commissioners, that the Brahman tāli-tier was a relic of the time when the Nambūtiris were entitled to the first fruits, and it was considered the high privilege of every Nāyar maid to be introduced by them to womanhood. In this connection, reference may be made to Hamilton's 'New Account of the East Indies', where it is stated that [793] "when the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambūdri, or chief priest, has enjoyed her, and he, if he pleases, may have three nights of her company, because the first fruits of her nuptials must be an holy oblation to the god she worships. And some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the clergy the same tribute, but the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the priests' places themselves."

588 Of those who gave evidence before the Malabar Commission, some thought the tāli-kettu was a marriage, some not. Others called it a mock marriage, a formal marriage, a sham marriage, a fictitious marriage, a marriage sacrament, the preliminary part of marriage, a meaningless ceremony, an empty form, a ridiculous farce, an incongruous custom, a waste of money, and a device for becoming involved in debt. "While," the report states, "a small minority of strict conservatives still maintain that the tāli-kettu is a real marriage intended to confer on the bridegroom a right to cohabit with the bride, an immense majority describe it as a fictitious marriage, the origin of which they are at a loss to explain. And another large section tender the explanation accepted by our President (Sir T. Muttusami Aiyar) that, in some way or other, it is an essential caste observance preliminary to the forming of sexual relations."

In a recent note, Mr. K. Kannan Nâyar writes[*]: 588
"Almost every Nâyar officer in Government employ, [648]
when applying for leave on account of the kettukalliânam of his daughter or niece, states in his application that he has to attend to the 'marriage' of the girl. The ceremony is generally mentioned as marriage even in the letters of invitation sent by Nâyar gentlemen in these days. . . 796
. This ceremony is not intended even for the betrothal 588
of the girl to a particular man, but is one instituted [779]
under Brâhman influence as an important kriya (sacrament) antecedent to marriage, and intended, as the popular saying indicates, for dubbing the girl with the status of Amma, a woman fit to be married. The saying is Tâli-kettiu Amma âyi, which means a woman has become an Amma when her tali-tying ceremony is over."

In summing up the evidence collected by him, Mr. 588
L. Moore states [†] that it seems to prove beyond all reason- 178
able doubt that "from the sixteenth century at all events, 174
and up to the early portion of the nineteenth century, the relations between the sexes in families governed by marumakkattayam were of as loose a description as it is possible to imagine. The tâli-kettu kalyânam, introduced by the Brâhmans, brought about no improvement, and indeed in all probability made matters much worse by giving a quasi-religious sanction to a fictitious marriage, which bears an unpleasant resemblance to the sham marriage ceremonies performed among certain inferior castes elsewhere as a cloak for prostitution. As years passed, some time about the opening of the nineteenth century, the Kêrala Mahatmyam and Keralolpathi were concocted, probably by Nambûdris, and false and pernicious doctrines as to the obligations laid on the

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[*] Malabar Quart. Review, VII, 3, 1908. [†] *Op. cit.*

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178 Nāyars by divine law to administer to the lust of the
174 Nambūdris were disseminated abroad. The better
[585] classes among the Nāyars revolted against the degrad-
ing custom thus established, and a custom sprang up,
[613] especially in North Malabar, of making sambandham a
more or less formal contract, approved and sanctioned
by the karnavan (senior male) of the tarwad to which
the lady belonged, and celebrated with elaborate
585 ceremony under the pudamuri form. That there was
[174] nothing analogous to the pudamuri prevalent in Malabar
from A.D. 1550 to 1800 may, I think, be fairly presumed
from the absence of all allusion to it in the works of
the various European writers." According to Act IV,
Madras, 1896, sambandham means an alliance between
a man and a woman, by reason of which they in accordance with the custom of the community to which they belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to cohabit as husband and wife.

Of sambandham the following account was given by Mr. Chandu Menon to the Malabar Marriage Commission. "The variations of the sambandham are the pudamuri, vastradānam, uzhamporukkuka, vitāram kayaruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malaiyāli who would not readily understand what is meant by sambandham tudanguga (to begin sambandham). The meaning of this phrase, which means to 'marry,' is understood throughout Kēraḷam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it. It is thus found that sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among marumakkatāyam
[192] Nāyars. [Sambandhakāran is now the common term for
[184] husband.] It will also be found, on a close and careful
examination of facts, that the principal features of this

sambandham ceremony all over Kēralam are in the main 585
the same. As there are different local names denoting 184
marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examina- [787]
tion, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically; the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony; the usual hour at which the ceremony takes place; the presentation [431]
of dānam (gifts) to Brāhmans; sumptuous banquet; the [574]
meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted sambandhams in all parts of Kēralam alike. But here I would state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all sambandhams among respectable Nāyars; and I would further state that they ought to be gone through at every sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the pudamuri or vastradānam as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of sambandham, I consider the pudamuri the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The prelimi- [787]
nary ceremony in every pudamuri is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down

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184 the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf,
[787] with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match,
and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the
horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the
[212] celebration of the marriage. This date is also written
down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is
handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other
[791] to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the
[574] bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house,
and the former also receives presents in the shape of
[431] money or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which
is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North
Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown
in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to
the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the
bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste,
(584) to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on
such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts,
and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On
the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset
to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of
his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at
the gate of the house by the bride's party, and conducted
with his friends to seats provided in the tekkini
[431] or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom
[574] distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the
Brāhmans assembled. After this, the whole party is
treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the
astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour
fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues.
The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the
padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's
party has, of course, brought with them a
quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

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cloths are placed in the western room of the house (padinhatta), in which all religious and other important [342] household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and ashtamangalyam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of mangalyam or marriage. These are rice, paddy (unhusked rice), the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round box called cheppu. These will be found placed on the floor of the room as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groomsman enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloths and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east, with the ashtamangalyam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groomsman then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride sprinkles rice over the lamps and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom, who immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkini or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. Next morning, the vettilakettu [574] or salkāram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is feasting in honour of the occasion. Uzhamporukkuka or vīdāram kayaral is a peculiar form

575 of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the
184 description given above that the pudamuri is necessarily
a costly ceremony, and many people resort to the less
costly ceremony of uzhamporukkuka or vidāram kayaral.
The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the
same as pudamuri, but it is celebrated on a smaller scale.
574 There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The feasting is
confined to the relations of the couple. The particular
incident of this form of marriage is that the husband
should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to
take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the
regular pudamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered
to in North Malabar, and instances in which the
husband and wife joined by the uzhamporukkuka ceremony, and with grown-up children as the issue of such
marriage, undergo the pudamuri ceremony some fifteen
or twenty years after uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable
the husband to take the wife to his house, are known
to me personally. The sambandham of South Malabar,
and the kidakkora kalyānam of Palghat have all or most
of the incidents of pudamuri, except the presenting of
cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the
other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is
also salkāram ceremony wanting in South Malabar, as
the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house
after marriage."

585 In connection with the following note by Mr. C. P.
Rāman Menon on sambandham among the Akattu
Charna or Akathithaparisha (inside clan), Mr. Fawcett
582 states that "my informant says in the first place that the
man should not enter into sambandham with a woman
179 until he is thirty. Now-a-days, when change is running
181 wild, the man is often much less. In North Malabar,
582 which is much more conservative than the south, it was,

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however, my experience that sambandham was rare [181]
on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The [582]
Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women [584]
of his household choose the bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are [787]
informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have sambandham with . . . . (naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony. The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for the evening, 585
and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same 574
age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel [431]
leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the [613]
taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household, and which are distributed to the guests. When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again [276]

585 served with food, after which they are conducted to a
574 room, where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on
[276] brass or silver plates called thâlam. The chewing over, sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal chamber, where the women of the house and others are assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness,
585 hides herself behind the others. Here again the bridegroom and his party go through more chewing, while they chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw, wishing the couple all happiness, and then the women, departing one by one, leave the couple alone, one of
[431] them shutting the door from the outside. The Pattar Brâhmans always collect on these occasions, and receive small presents (dakshina) of two to four annas each, with betel leaves and areca nuts from the bridegroom, and sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited receive their dakshina in the bridal chamber, the others outside.
[513] Those of the bridegroom's party who live far away are given sleeping accommodation at the bride's house [in a Nâyar house the sleeping rooms of the men and women are at different ends of the house]. About daybreak next morning the bridegroom leaves the house with his party, leaving under his pillow 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees, according to his means, which are intended to cover the expenses of the wife's household in connection with the ceremony. The sambandham is now complete.
[591] The girl remains in her own taravad house, and her
[613] husband visits her there, coming in the evening and leaving next morning. A few days after the com-
[431] pletion of the ceremony, the senior woman of the
[796] bridegroom's house sends some cloths, including pavu mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu mundu (towels), and some oil to the bride for her use for six months. Every six months she does the same, and, at the Ônam,

Vishu, and Thiruvathira festivals, she sends besides a 585
little money, areca nuts, betel and tobacco. The money [431]
sent should be 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees. Higher sums [796]
are very rarely sent. Before long, the women of the
husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be 585
brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. 574
Again the astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day [787]
he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of
the girl, or, as they call her, Ammāyi (uncle's wife).
They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl
with them. As she is about to enter the gate-house of
her husband's taravad, the stile of which she crosses right
leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a
burning lamp and a brass plate (thālam), and precede
her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated [788]
on a mat, and a burning lamp, a nazhi (measure) of rice,
and some plantains are placed before her. One of the
younger women takes up a plantain, and puts a piece
of it in the Ammāyi's mouth; a little ceremony called
madhuram tītal, or giving the sweets for eating. She [431]
lives in her husband's house for a few days, and is then
sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or
cloths, which are gifts of the senior woman of the house.
After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house
on any day, auspicious or inauspicious. In a big taravad, 613
where there are many women, the Ammāyi does not, as 596
a rule, get much sympathy and good-will in the house- 585
hold, and, if she happens to live temporarily in her [591]
husband's house, as is sometimes, though very rarely
the case in South Malabar, and to be the wife of the
Karanavan, it is observed that she gets more than her
share of whatever good things may be going. Hence
the proverb, 'Place Ammāyi Amma on a stone, and grind
her with another stone.' A sambandham ceremony at

585 A sambandham ceremony at
Calicut is recorded by Mr. Fawcett, at which there were
[574] cake and wine for the guests, and a ring for the bride.

[184] In connection with sambandham, Mr. N. Subramani
Aiyar writes from Travancore that "it is known in
different localities as gunadosham (union through good
or evil), vastradānam or putavakota (giving of cloth),
and uzhamporukkal (waiting one's turn). It may be
performed without any formal ceremony whatever, and
is actually a private transaction confidentially gone
through in some families. The bridegroom and his
friends assemble at the house of the bride on the
appointed night, and, before the assembled guests, the
bridegroom presents the bride with a few unbleached
cloths. Custom enjoins that four pieces of cloth should
be presented, and the occasion is availed of to present
cloths to the relatives and servants of the bride also.
The girl asks permission of her mother and maternal
[43] uncle, before she receives the cloths. After supper, and
the distribution of pān-supāri, the party disperses.
Another day is fixed for the consummation ceremony.
[574] On that day the bridegroom, accompanied by a few
friends, goes to the bride's house with betel leaves and
nuts. After a feast, the friends retire."

It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that
one name for the sambandham rite is kitakkora, meaning
881 bed-chamber ceremony. In the same report, the following
account of a puberty ceremony is given. "The tirandukuli
ceremony is practically a public declaration that a
girl has reached the age of maturity. When a girl
attains puberty, she is seated in a separate room, where
a lamp is lit, and a brass pot with a bunch of cocoanut
flowers is kept. She has to keep with her a circular
plate of brass called vālkannādi, literally a looking-glass
with a handle. The event is proclaimed by korava

(shouts of joy by females). The females of the 881
neighbouring houses, and of the families of friends and
relatives, visit her. New cloths are presented to the girl
by her near relatives. On the third day the villagers,
friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and
milk pudding. Early in the morning on the fourth day,
the Mannans or Vêlans appear. The girl is anointed
with oil, and tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied
round the head and waist. In the company of maidens [533]
she is brought out of the room, and the Vêlans sing
certain songs. Thence the party move on to the tank,
where the girl wears a cloth washed by a Vêlan, and
takes a bath. After the bath the Vêlans again sing [533]
songs. In the afternoon, the girl is taken out by [574]
the females invited for the occasion to an ornamental [431]
pandal, and the Vêlans, standing at a distance, once more
sing. With the usual distribution of pân-supâri, sandal
and jasmine flowers, the ceremony closes. In the midst
of the song, the female guests of the village, the wives
of friends and relatives, and most of the members of
the family itself, present each a small cloth to the
Vêlans. They are also given a small amount of money,
rice, betel leaf, etc. The guests are then entertained at [574]
a feast. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate
house for the bath on the fourth day, whence she returns
to her house in procession, accompanied by tom-toms
and shouting. In the northern tâluks, the Vêlan's song [533]
is in the night, and the performance of the ceremony [184]
on the fourth day is compulsory. In the southern tâluks,
it is often put off to some convenient day. Before the
completion of this song ceremony, the girl is prohibited
from going out of the house or entering temples."

It is provided, by the Malabar Marriage Act, 1896, that, 575
" when a sambandham has been registered in the manner 217
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585 217 656 therein laid down, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage ; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father, respectively, and to succeed to half his self-acquired [586 property, if he dies intestate ; while the parties to such a sambandham cannot register a second sambandham during its continuance, that is, until it is terminated by death or by a formal application for divorce in the Civil 585 182 656 Courts. The total number of sambandhams registered under the Act has, however, been infinitesimal, and the reason for this is, admittedly, the reluctance of the men to fetter their liberty to terminate sambandham at will by such restrictions as the necessity for formal divorce, or to undertake the burdensome responsibility of a legal obligation to maintain their wife and offspring. If, as the evidence recorded by the Malabar Marriage Commission tended to show, 'a marriage law in North Malabar, and throughout the greater part of South Malabar, would merely legalise what is the prevailing custom,' it is hard to see why there has been such a disinclination to lend to that custom the dignity of legal sanction." * The following applications to register sambandhams under the Act were received from 1897 to 1904 :—

—	Nâyars.	Tiyans.	Others.	Total.
1897	28	6	2	36
1898	8	2	4	14
1899	8	2	4	14
1900	8	..	9	17
1901	3	...	1	4
1902	...	...	...	...
1903	2	...	...	2
Total ...	57	10	20	87

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* Gazetteer of Malabar.

In a recent account of a Nâyar wedding in high life 585
in Travancore, the host is said to have distributed flowers, 177
attar, etc., to all his Hindu guests, while the European,
Eurasian, and other Christian guests, partook of cake
and wine, and other refreshments, in a separate tent.
The Chief Secretary to Government proposed the toast
of the bride and bridegroom.

The following note on Nâyar pregnancy ceremonies 843
was supplied to Mr. Fawcett by Mr. U. Balakrishnan
Nâyar. "A woman has to observe certain ceremonies
during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh [264]
month, she (at least among the well-to-do classes) bathes,
and worships in the temple every morning, and eats before
her morning meal a small quantity of butter, over which
mantrams (consecrated formulæ) have been said by
the temple priest, or by Nambûtiris. This is generally
done till delivery. Another, and even more important
ceremony, is the puli-kuti (drinking tamarind juice).
This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by rich
and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month.
The day and hour are fixed by the local astrologer. [787]
The ceremony begins with the planting of a twig of
the ampasham tree on the morning of the day of the
ceremony in the principal courtyard (natu-muttam) of
the taravâd. At the appointed hour or muhûrtam,
the pregnant woman, after having bathed, and properly
attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house
(vatakini or northern wing), where she is seated, facing
eastward. The ammayi, or uncle's wife, whose presence [604]
on the occasion is necessary, goes to the courtyard, and,
plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few
drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to 843
the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is neces- 593
sary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his

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593 right ring finger. Holding a country knife (pissan
kathi) in his left hand, which he directs towards the
mouth, he pours the tamarind juice over the knife with
his right hand three times, and it dribbles down the knife
[602] into the woman's mouth, and she drinks it. In the
absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates.
843 After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, the woman is
asked to pick out one of several packets of different grains
placed before her. The grain in the packet she happens
to select is supposed to declare the sex of the child in
[574] her womb. The ceremony winds up with a sumptuous
feast to all the relatives and friends of the family."
In connection with pregnancy ceremonies, Mr. N.
Subramani Aiyar writes that "the puli-kuti ceremony
is performed at the seventh, or sometimes the ninth
month. The husband has to contribute the rice, cocoanut,
and plantains, and present seven vessels containing sweetmeats.
In the absence of a brother, a Mārān pours the
juice into the mouth of the woman." It is noted in the
Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the puli-kudi ceremony
consists in administering to the woman with child
a few pills of tamarind and other acid substances. The
pills are placed at the end of a knife-blade, and pushed
into the mouth of the woman by means of a gold ring.
[593] The ceremony, which in a way corresponds to the
[604] pumsavana of the Brāhmans, is performed either by a
brother or uncle of the woman, and, in the absence
of both, by the husband himself. Unlike Brāhmans, the
ceremony is performed only at the time of the first
pregnancy." In the eighth month, a ceremony, called
garbha veli uzhiyal, is performed by the Kaniyan
(astrologer) to remove the effects of the evil eye.

The ceremonies observed in connection with pregnancy are described as follows in the Gazetteer of

Malabar. "The first regular ceremony performed 843
during pregnancy is known as pulikudi or drinking tamarind, which corresponds to the Pumsavanam of the Brâhmans. But there are other observances of less importance, which commonly, if not invariably, precede this, and may be considered as corresponding to the Garbharakshana (embryo or womb protection) ceremony sometimes performed by Brâhmans, though not one of the obligatory sacraments. Sometimes the [778]
pregnant woman is made to consume daily a little ghee (clarified butter), which has been consecrated by a Nambûdiri with appropriate mantrams. Sometimes [793]
exorcists of the lower castes, such as Pânans, are [789]
called in, and perform a ceremony called Balikkala, in [534]
which they draw magic patterns on the ground, into which the girl throws lighted wicks, and sing rude songs to avert from the unborn babe the unwelcome attentions of evil spirits, accompanying them on a small drum called tudi, or with bell-metal cymbals. The ceremony [782]
concludes with the sacrifice of a cock, if the woman is badly affected by the singing. The pulikudi is variously performed in the fifth, seventh, or ninth month. An [787]
auspicious hour has to be selected by the village astrologer for this as for most ceremonies. A branch [824]
of a tamarind tree should be plucked by the pregnant [415]
woman's brother, who should go to the tree with a kindi [354]
(bell-metal vessel) of water, followed by an Enangatti * carrying a hanging lamp with five wicks (tukkuvilakku), and, before plucking it, perform three pradakshinams round it. In the room in which the ceremony is to be

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* An Enangan or Inangan is a man of the same caste and sub-division or marriage group. It is usually translated "kinsman," but is at once wider and narrower in its connotation. My Enangans are all who can marry the same people that I can. An Enangatti is a female member of an Enangan's family.

843 performed, usually the vadakkini, there is arranged a
mat, the usual lamp (nilavilakku) with five wicks, and a
para measure of rice (niracchaveppu), also the materials
necessary for the performance of Ganapathi pūja (wor-
ship of the god Ganēsa), consisting of plantains, brown
sugar, leaves of the sacred basil or tulasi (*Ocimum
sanctum*), sandal paste, and the eight spices called
[593] ashtagantham. The woman's brother performs Ganapathi
pūja, and then gives some of the tamarind leaves to the
Enangatti, who expresses their juice, and mixes it with
[824] that of four other plants.* The mixture is boiled with
a little rice, and the brother takes a little of it in a jack
[602] (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) leaf folded like a spoon, and
lets it run down the blade of a knife into his sister's
mouth. He does this three times. Then the mixture
is administered in the same manner by some woman of
the husband's family, and then by an Ammāyi (wife of
[574] one of the members of the girl's tarwad). The branch
is then planted in the nadumittam, and feasting brings
the ceremony to a close. The above description was
obtained from an Urali Nāyar of Calicut taluk. In
other localities and castes, the details vary considerably.
[564] Sometimes the mixture is simply poured into the
woman's mouth, instead of being dripped off a knife.
Some castes use a small spoon of gold or silver instead
184 of the jack leaves. In South Malabar there is not as
843 a rule any procession to the tamarind tree. Among
564 Agathu Charna Nāyars of South Malabar, the ceremony
takes place in the nadumittam, whither the tamarind
branch is brought by a Tiyan. The girl carries a
valkannadi or bell-metal mirror, a charakkōl or arrow,
and a pisankatti (knife). An Enangatti pours some oil

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[137] * The aimpuli or "five tamarinds" are *Tamarindus indica*, *Garcinia Cambogia*, *Spondias mangifera*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, and *Hibiscus hirtus*.

on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs 843
to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the 564
girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with
the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind
branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the [782]
juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl [824]
waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers,
and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour
begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, 844
"women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In 564
some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. 783
Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the 846
mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman [564]
of the Vannān [or Tīyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is
the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, [764]
a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the [825]
woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of [824]
the cow (pānchagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds.
Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the
ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the
family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water
from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's
head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she
again plunges in the water, from which she emerges
thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the
mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has
also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on
the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few
drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The [828]
superstitious believe that the temperament of the child
is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles
the water. All the members of the taravād observe [613]
pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during

846 [613] which they are prohibited from entering temples and
holy places." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar
[844] that the first act done, when a male child is born, is to
[828] beat the earth with a cocoanut leaf, and, if the issue is a
female, to grind some turmeric in a mortar, with the
object, it is said, of removing the child's fear.

553 In connection with post-natal ceremonies, Mr. Bala-
[846] krishnan Nāyar writes further that "the twenty-seventh
[821] day after the child's birth, or the first recurring day of
the star under which it was born, marks the next impor-
[613] tant event. On this day, the Karanavan of the family
gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk mixed with
[574] sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child,
and calls it in the ear by the name three times. This
is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the
expenses of which are met by the father of the child.
852 With the Nāyar, every event is introduced by a cere-
853 monial. The first meal of rice (chorūn) partaken of
by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be
remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some
time after birth, the practice being to give it flour of
dried plantain boiled with jaggery (crude sugar). There
is a particular variety of plantain, called kunnan, used for
this purpose. Rice is given to the child for the first
[787] time generally during the sixth month. The astrologer
fixes the day, and, at the auspicious hour, the child,
bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the
duty of the father to provide) is brought, and laid on a
plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a
lighted brass lamp placed near. On the leaf are served
a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of
the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind,
salt, chillies, and sugar. [In some places all the curries,
etc., prepared for the attendant feast, are also served.]

Then the Karanavan, or the father, ceremoniously 852
approaches, and sits down facing the child. First he 853
puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, [613]
chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly a little sugar.
Thenceforward the ordinary food of the child is rice.
It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially
the bandhus, such as the ammayi, or 'uncle's wife')
to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other
ornaments. The rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases,
preferably performed at some famous temple, that at
Guruvayūr being a favourite one for this purpose." It [782]
is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the rice-giving [553]
ceremony is usually performed by taking the
child to a neighbouring temple, and feeding it with the
meal offered to the deity as nivadiyam. In some places,
the child is named on the chorūn day.

Of ceremonies which take place in infancy and childhood, 852
the following account is given in the Gazetteer of 846
Malabar. "On the fifth day after birth, a woman of the 564
Attikurissi or Mārayan caste among Nāyars, or of the
barber caste in the lower classes, is called in, and purifies
the mother, the other women of the household, and the
room in which the child was born, by lustration with milk
and gingelly oil, using karuga (*Cynodon Dactylon*) as a
sprinkler. Her perquisites are the usual niracchaveppu
(1 edangazhi of paddy and 1 nazhi of uncooked rice)
placed together with a lamp of five wicks in the room
to be cleansed, and a small sum in cash. A similar
purification ceremony on the 15th day concludes the
pollution period. In some cases, milk and cow's urine [386]
are sprinkled over the woman, and, after she has bathed, [824]
the Mārayan or Attikurissi waves over her and the
child two vessels, one containing water stained red
with turmeric and lime, and one water blackened with
powdered charcoal.

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846 564 powdered charcoal. During this and other periods, a characteristic service called mãttu (change) has to be rendered by people of the Mannãn caste to Nãyars, and to other castes by their proper washermen, who may or [844] may not be Mannãns. On the day of birth, the Mannãtti brings a clean tũni (cloth) of her own, and a mundu (cloth), which she places in the yard, in which she finds the accustomed perquisites of grain set out, and a lamp. An Attikurissi Nãyar woman takes the clean clothes, and the Mannãtti removes those previously worn by the mother. Every subsequent day during the pollution period, the Mannãtti brings a change of raiment, but it is only on the 7th and 15th days that any ceremonial is observed, and that the Attikurissi woman is required. On those days, a Mannãn man attends with the Mannãtti. He makes three pradakshinams round the clean clothes, the lamp, and the niracchaveppu, and scatters a little of the grain forming the latter on the ground near it, with an obeisance, before the Attikurissi woman takes the clothes indoors. This rite of mãttu has far reaching importance. [626] It affords a weapon, by means of which the local tyrant can readily coerce his neighbours, whom he can subject to the disabilities of excommunication by forbidding the washerman to render them this service; while it contributes in no small degree to the reluctance of Malayãli women to leave Kërala, since it is essential that the mãttu should be furnished by the appropriate caste and no other.

852 "On the twenty-eighth day (including the day of birth) comes the Pãlu-kudi (milk-drinking) ceremony, at which some women of the father's family must attend. [591] Amongst castes in which the wife lives with the husband, [564] the ceremony takes place in the husband's house, to which the wife and child return for the first time on this day. The usual lamp, niracchaveppu and kindi of water,

are set forth with a plate, if possible of silver, containing 852
milk, honey, and bits of a sort of plantain called kunnan,
together with three jack leaves folded to serve as spoons.
The mother brings the child newly bathed, and places it 852
in his Karnavan's lap. The goldsmith is in attendance 613
with a string of five beads (mani or kuzhal) made of the [326]
panchaloham or five metals, gold, silver, iron, copper [823]
and lead, which the father ties round the baby's waist.
The Karnavan, or the mother, then administers a spoonful
of the contents of the plate to the child with each of
the jack leaves in turn. The father's sister, or other [853]
female relative, also administers some, and the Karnavan
then whispers the child's name thrice in its right ear.

"The name is not publicly announced till the Chōr- 553
unnu or Annaprāsanam (rice giving), which takes place [787]
generally in the sixth month, and must be performed at
an auspicious moment prescribed by an astrologer. The
paraphernalia required are, besides the five-wicked lamp,
some plantain leaves on which are served rice and four
kinds of curry called kalan, olan, avil, and ericchakari,
some pappadams (wafers of flour and other ingredients),
plantains and sweetmeats called uppēri (plantains fried
in cocoanut oil). The mother brings the child newly 553
bathed, and wearing a cloth for the first time, and places 613
it in the Karnavan's lap. The father then ties round the
child's neck a gold ring, known as muhurta mothiram
(auspicious moment ring), and the relatives present give
the child other ornaments of gold or silver according to
their means, usually a nūl or neck-thread adorned with
one or more pendants, an arannal or girdle, a pair of
bangles, and a pair of anklets. The Karnavan then, [782]
after an oblation to Ganapathi, gives the child some
of the curry, and whispers its name in its right ear three
times. He then carries the child to a cocoanut tree

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613 near the house, round which he makes three pradakshinams,
pouring water from a kindi round the foot of the
tree as he does so. The procession then returns to the
house, and on the way an old woman of the family
proclaims the baby's name aloud for the first time in the
form of a question, asking it 'Krishnan' (for instance),
'dost thou see the sky?' In some cases, the father
simply calls out the name twice.

852 "The Vidyarambham ceremony to celebrate the
871 beginning of the child's education takes place in the fifth
[778] or seventh year. In some places, the child is first taken
to the temple, where some water sanctified by mantrams
is poured over his head by the Shântikâran (officiating
priest). The ceremony at the house is opened by Ganapathi
pûja performed by an Ezhuttacchan, or by a
[782] Nambûdri, or another Nâyar. The Ezhuttacchan writes
on the child's tongue with a gold fanam (coin) the invocation
to Ganapathi (Hari Sri Ganapathayi nama), or
sometimes the fifty-one letters of the Malayalam alphabet,
and then grasps the middle finger of the child's right
hand, and with it traces the same letters in parched rice.
He also gives the child an ola (strip of palm leaf)
inscribed with them, and receives in return a small fee
[875] in cash. Next the child thrice touches first the
Ezhuttacchan's feet, and then his own forehead with his
[576] right hand, in token of that reverent submission to the
teacher, which seems to have been the key-note of the old
Hindu system of education.

304 "The Kâthukuttu or ear-boring is performed either
at the same time as the Pâla-kudi or the Choulam, or at
any time in the fifth or seventh year. The operator, who
may be any one possessing the necessary skill, pierces
first the right and then the left ear with two gold or
silver wires brought by the goldsmith, or with karamullu

thorns. The wires or thorns are left in the ears. In 304
the case of girls, the hole is subsequently gradually [301]
distended by the insertion of nine different kinds of
thorns or plugs in succession, the last of which is a
bamboo plug, till it is large enough to admit the characteristic Malayâli ear ornament, the boss-shaped toda."

Of the death ceremonies among the Nâyars of Malabar, 763
the following detailed account is given by Mr. Fawcett.
"When the dying person is about to embark for that [824]
bourne from which no traveller returns, and the breath is [823]
about to leave his body, the members of the household, and
all friends who may be present, one by one, pour a little
water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two
of the tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), into his mouth, holding in
the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring, the idea being
that the person should touch gold ere it enters the mouth
of the person who is dying. If the taravâd is rich [613]
enough to afford it, a small gold coin (a râsi fanam, if one
can be procured) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are
closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is 764
removed from the cot or bed and carried to the vatakkini [824]
(a room in the northern end of the house), where it is
placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor;
and, while it is in the room, whether by day or night, a [613]
lamp is kept burning, and one member of the taravâd
holds the head in his lap, and another the feet in the
same way; and here the neighbours come to take a
farewell look at the dead. As the Malayâlis believe [775]
that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon
as possible after death is conducive to the happiness
of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting
about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of [613]
the taravâd, male or female, are burned, those of [766]
children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all

764 persons who have died of cholera or small-pox. When
[766] preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse
[351] is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house, if there is one (there always is in the larger houses); and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard, where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandal paste
764 and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is
613 then done what is called the potavekkuka ceremony, or placing new cotton cloths (kōti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the deceased's taravād followed by all the other members, and also the sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse, when being taken to
[184] the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of Malabar, the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried, well covered in the cloths, by hand. In either case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed, there is done another ceremony called pāra-
[804] virakkuka, or filling up pāras. (A pāra is a measure
564 nearly as big as a gallon.) All adult male members of the taravād take part in it under the direction of a man of the Attikkurissi clan who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisites all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit. It consists in filling up three pára measures with paddy (unhusked rice), and one edangāli ($\frac{1}{16}$ of a pâra) with raw
[782] rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a burning lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela vilaku. If the taravād is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before its removal for cremation.

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at 764
the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of 613
the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of plantain tree, one at each end, and one in the middle, on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The [824] whole, or at least a part of the wood used, should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally a long key. This individual is throughout chief among [782] the offerers of pindam (balls of rice) to the deceased. The [823] corpse is laid on the bier with the head to the south, with the fuel laid over it, and a little camphor, sandalwood and ghī (clarified butter); if these things are within the means of the taravād. Here must be stated [561] the invariable rule that no member of the taravād, male or female, who is older than the deceased, shall take any part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire to the pyre ; failing a son, the next junior in age to her has the right to do it. It is a matter of greatest

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* The eldest male member of the taravād is called the Karanavan. All male members, brothers, nephews, and so on, who are junior to him, are called Anandravans of the taravād.

764 importance that the whole pyre burns at once. The 613 greatest care is taken that it burns as a whole, consuming every part of the corpse. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the deceased's taravād who carried it to the pyre go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound or grounds round every Nāyar's house). The eldest, he who bears the piece of torn cloth and iron (the key), carries an earthen pot of water, and all return together to the place of cremation. [763] It should be said that, on the news of a death, the neighbours assemble, assisting in digging the grave, preparing the pyre, and so on, and, while the members of the taravād go and bathe, they remain near the corpse. By the time the relatives return it is almost consumed by the fire, and the senior Anandravan carries the pot of water thrice round the pyre, letting the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round. On completing the third round, he dashes the pot on the ground close by where the head of the dead body has been placed. A small image representing the deceased is then made out of raw rice, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly seeds are offered. When this has been done, the relatives go home and the neighbours depart, bathing before entering their houses. When the 764 cremation has been done by night, the duty of sēshakriya 782 (making offerings to the deceased's spirit) must be begun 775 the next day between 10 and 11 A.M., and is done on 613 seven consecutive days. In any case the time for this ceremony is after 10 and before 11, and it continues for seven days. It is performed as follows. All male members of the taravād younger than the deceased go together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of them, the man who tore off the strip of cloth from

the corpse, has with him the same strip of cloth and 764
the piece of iron, and all assemble in the central 613
courtyard of the house, where there have been placed 782
ready by an enangan some rice which has been half 775
boiled, a few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherūla (*Ærua lanata*), some curds, a smaller measure of paddy, and a smaller measure of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it is knotted. The knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice and other things are offered to it. The belief concerning this piece of palmyra leaf is
explained thus. There are in the human body ten [826]
humours:—Vāyūs, Prānan, Apānan, Samānan, Udānan, [994]
Vyānan, Nāgan, Kurman, Krikalan, Dēvadattan, Dhananjayan. These are called Dasavāyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for the first time, all these, excepting the last, were destroyed by the fire. The last one flew up, and settled on a palmyra leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brāhman sages, who, by means of mantrams, forced it down to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought that, by making offerings to this Dhananjayan leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified, should he have any anger to vent on the living members of the taravād. The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has been carefully cleaned, and the leaf is fixed in the centre of the prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct to the spirit of the deceased, and the peace of the taravād is assured. The men who have bathed and returned have brought with them some grass (karuka pulla), plucked on their way back to the house.

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They kneel in front of the piece of palmyra, with the right knee on the ground. Some of the grass is spread on the ground near the piece of leaf, and rings made with it are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by each one present. The first offerings consist of water, sandal paste, and leaves of the cherūla, the eldest of the Anandravans leading the way. Boys need not go through the actual performance of offerings; it suffices for them to touch the eldest as he is making the offerings. The half boiled rice is made into balls (pindam), and each one present takes one of these in his right hand, and places it on the grass near the piece of palmyra leaf. Some gingelly seeds are put into the curd, which is poured so as to make three rings round the pindams. It is poured out of a small cup made with the leaf on which the half-boiled rice had been placed. It should not be poured from any other kind of vessel. The whole is then covered with this same plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved, and some milk is put under the leaf. It is undisturbed for some moments, and leaf is gently tapped with the back of the fingers of the right hand. The leaf is then removed, and torn in two at its midrib, one piece being placed on either side of the pindams. The ceremony is then over for the day. The performers rise, and remove the wet clothing they have been wearing. The eldest of the Anandravans should, it was omitted to mention, be kept somewhat separated from the other Anandravans while in the courtyard, and before the corpse is removed for cremation; a son-in-law or daughter-in-law, or some such kind of relation remaining, as it were, between him and them. He has had the piece of cloth torn from the covering of the corpse tied round his waist, and the piece of iron in the folds of his cloth, or stuck in his waist during the ceremony

which has just been described. Now, when it has been 764
completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the 613
house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has 782
been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a 775
safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with
a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at
the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated.
The balls of rice are removed by women and girls of the
taravād who are junior to the deceased. They place
them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was
boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and
leads the way to a tank, on the bank of which the rice
is thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat [825]
it; for, if they do, the impression is received that the
deceased's spirit is pleased with the offering. But, if
somehow it is thought that the crows will not come and
eat it, the rice is thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to
be allowed to eat it. The women bathe after the rice
has been thrown away. When the ceremony which has
been described has been performed for the seventh time,
i.e., on the seventh day after death, the piece of palmyra
leaf is removed from the ground, and thrown on the
ashes of the deceased at the place of cremation. During 765
these seven days, no member of the taravād goes to any 613
other house. The house of the dead, and all its inmates 783
are under pollution. No outsider enters it but under 574
ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing.
A visitor entering the house of the dead during
these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own
house. During these seven days, the Karanavan of the
family receives visits of condolence from relatives and
friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday
or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel, and go
home, bathing ere they enter their houses. It is said

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613 that, in some parts of Malabar, the visitors bring with
574 them small presents in money or kind to help the
[783] Karanavan through the expenditure to which the funeral
rites necessarily put him. To hark back a little, it must
not be omitted that, on the third day after the death, all
those who are related by marriage to the taravād of the
deceased combine, and give a good feast to the inmates
of the house and to the neighbours who are invited, one
man or woman from each house. The person so invited
is expected to come. This feast is called patni karigi.
On the seventh day, a return feast will be given by the
taravād of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.
Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
ceremony is observed, but the members of the taravād
remain under death pollution. On the fourteenth day
764 comes the sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the cal-
613 cined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male
[415] members of the taravād go to the place of cremation,
and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they
find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been
sun-dried (not burnt by fire in the usual way), cover
up the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and,
all following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the
nearest river (it must be running water), which receives
the remains of the dead. The men then bathe, and return
[184] home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected
[778] on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better
by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to
take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gaya,
Ramēswaram, or even to some place of sanctity much
nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynaad, and there
764 dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or
769 ashes of any one having been taken to Gaya and there
613 deposited in the river, the survivors of the taravād have

no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. 764
This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the 613 [769]
need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the
collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead [775]
gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, [787]
the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living
members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women,
possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On 764
the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. 613
Until this has been done, any one touched by any 783
member of the taravād should bathe before he enters
his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the [564]
Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in
which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the
persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and
the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution.
The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices [465]
on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the
taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a 766
taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, 613
there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the 765
sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and 302
friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams
there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body
unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no
variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The [184]
forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I
have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year.
He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of
the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears 766
the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who 765
is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly 613
seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after [782]
his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from [784]
[834]

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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613 alcoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also from
765 tobacco. When the dīksha is observed, the ashes of the
[784] dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-
[834] dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year
after death. When it is carried on for a year, there is
observed every month a ceremony called bali. It is
noteworthy that, in this monthly ceremony and for the
conclusion of the dīksha, it is not the thirtieth or three
hundred and sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the
ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star
which was presiding when the deceased met his death:
the returning day on which the star presides.* For the
[564] bali, a man of the Elayatu caste officiates. The Elayatus
[793] are priests for the Nāyars. They wear the Brāhmin's
thread, but they are not Brāhmins. They are not
permitted to study the Vēdas, but to the Nāyars they
[782] stand in the place of the ordinary purōhit. The officiat-
ing Elayatu prepares the rice for the bali, when to
the deceased, represented by karuka grass, are offered
boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds, and some other
[465] things. The Elayatu should be paid a rupee for his
services, which are considered necessary even when
the man under dīksha is himself familiar with the
[302] required ceremonial. The last day of the dīksha is one of
festivity. After the bali, the man under dīksha is shaved.
All this over, the only thing to be done for the deceased
is the annual srādh or yearly funeral commemorative rite.
[825] Rice-balls are made, and given to crows. Clapping of
[775] hands announces to these birds that the rice is being
thrown for them, and, should they not come at once and
eat, it is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the
taravād had better look out. The spirits of those who

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[805] * All caste Hindus who perform the srādh ceremonies calculate the day of death, not by the day of the month, but by the thithis (day after full or new moon).

The spirits of those who
have committed suicide, or met death by any violent 766
means, are always particularly vicious and troublesome 775
to the taravād, their spirits possessing and rendering miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless they [782]
are pacified, they will ruin the taravād, so Brāhman priests are called in, and appease them by means of tilahōmam, a rite in which sacrificial fire is raised, and ghī, gingelly, and other things are offered through it."

"There are," Mr. Fawcett writes, "many interesting 764
features in the death ceremonies as performed by the 184
Kiriattil class. Those who carry the corpse to the pyre 613
are dressed as women, their cloths being wet, and each [564]
carries a knife on his person. Two junior male members of the taravād thrust pieces of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, when they are lighted, throw them over their shoulders to the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern end of the pyre, two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice. All members of the taravād prostrate to the ground before the pyre. They follow the enangu carrying the pot of water round the pyre, and go home without looking round. They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled. After this is done the kodali ceremony, using the spade, axe, and big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all, and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre."

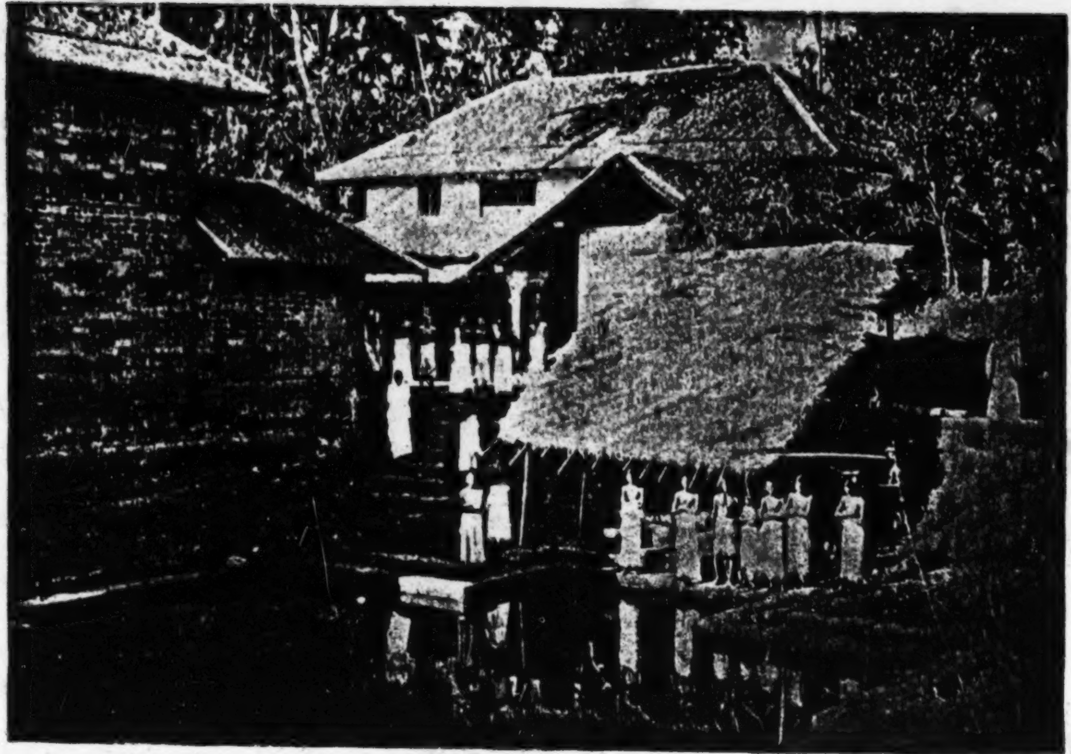
In connection with the death ceremonies, it is noted 763
in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the last 184

763 184 [778] moments of a dying person are really very trying. All members (male and female), junior to the dying person, pour into his or her mouth drops of Ganges or other holy water or conjee (rice) water in token of their last tribute of regard. Before the person breathes his last, he or she is removed to the bare floor, as it is considered sacrilegious to allow the last breath to escape while lying on the bed, and in a room with a ceiling, which last is supposed to obstruct the free passage of the breath. The names of gods, or sacred texts are loudly dinned into his or her ears, so that the person may quit this world with the recollections of God serving as a passport to heaven. The forehead, breast, and the joints especially are besmeared with holy ashes, so as to prevent the messengers of death from tightly tying those parts when they carry away the person. Soon
764 184 after the last breath, the dead body is removed to some open place in the house, covered from top to toe with a washed cloth, and deposited on the bare floor with the head towards the south, the region of the God of death. A lighted lamp is placed near the head, and other lights are placed all round the corpse. A mango tree is cut, or other firewood is collected, and a funeral pyre is constructed in the south-eastern corner of a compound or garden known as the corner of Agni, which is always reserved as a cemetery for the burning or burial of the dead. All male members, generally junior, bathe, and, without wiping their head or body, they remove the corpse to the yard in front of the house, and place it on a plantain leaf. It is nominally anointed with oil, and bathed in water. Ashes and sandal are again smeared on the forehead and joints. The old cloth is removed, and the body is covered with a new unwashed cloth or a piece of silk. A little gold or silver, or small coins are put into the

mouth. With the breaking of a cocoanut, and the offering 764
of some powdered rice, betel leaf, areca nut, etc., the 184
body is taken to the pyre. The members junior to the
deceased go round the pyre three, five, or seven times,
throw paddy and rice over the dead body, put scantlings
of sandal wood, prostrate at the feet of the corpse, and
then set fire to the pyre. When the body is almost
wholly consumed, one of the male members carries a pot
of water, and, after making three rounds, the pot is
broken and thrown into the pyre. The death of an [766]
elderly male member of a family is marked by udakakriya
and sanchayanam, and the daily bali performed at the
bali kutti (altar) planted in front of the house, or in the
courtyard in the centre of the house, where there is one.
The Ashtikurissi Nāyar officiates as priest at all such
obsequies. On the morning of the fifteenth day, the 765
members of the family wear cloths washed by a Vēlan, 783
and assemble together for purification by the Nāyar 184
priest, both before and after bathing, who throws on them
paddy and rice, and sprinkles the holy mixture. The
Elayad or family purōhit then performs another punnaya-
ham or purification, and on the sixteenth day he takes
the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth [574]
day, and the morning of the sixteenth day, the purōhits
and villagers are sumptuously feasted, and presents of
cloths and money are made to the Elayads. In the [564]
Chittūr tāluk, the Tamil Brāhman sometimes performs [793]
priestly functions in place of the Elayad. Diksha is [769]
performed for forty-one days, or for a whole year, for the
benefit of the departed soul. This last ceremony is
invariably performed on the death of the mother, maternal
uncle, and elder brother."

In connection with the habitations of the Nāyars, Mr. 342
Fawcett writes as follows. "A house may face east or [823]

[facing P. 361]



NĀYAR HOUSE.

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13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

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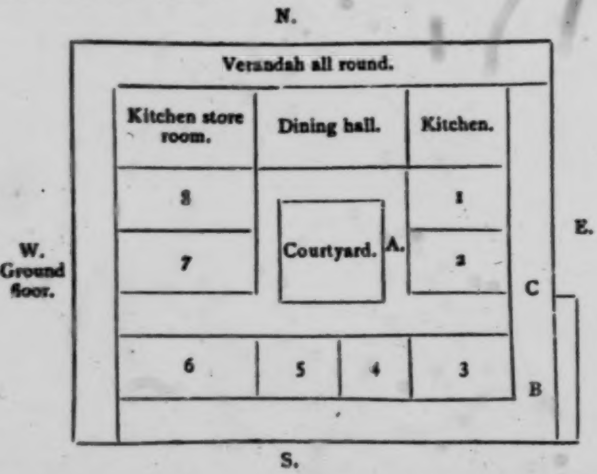
[823] west, never north or south; as a rule, it faces the east. Every garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing
351 of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, in the case of the poorest houses, a small portico or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this;
[184] there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the
342 Nāyars. The following is a plan of a nālapura or four-
556 sided house, which may be taken as representative of the houses of the rich :—



Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms, which are generally used for storing grain. At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is another staircase leading to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and women. No. 8 is for
[532] the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of
[613] the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver,
[735] or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot

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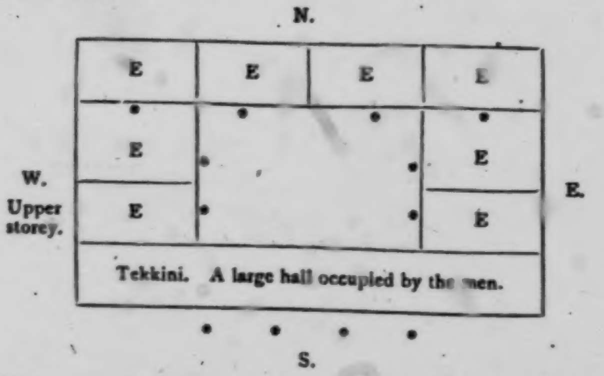
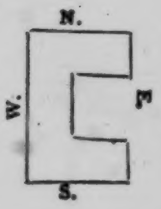
afford to have these images made, substitute a stone. [532] Offerings are made to these images, or to the stones at [613] every full moon. The throat of a fowl will be cut outside, [735] and the bird is then taken inside and offered. The [782] entrance is at C.



There are windows at * * *. E are rooms occupied by women and children. It may be noticed that the [513] apartment where the men sleep has no windows on the side of the house which is occupied by women. The latter are relatively free from control by the men as to who may visit them. We saw, when speaking of funeral [351] ceremonies, that a house is supposed to have a courtyard, and, of course, it has this only when there are four sides to the house. The nālapura is the proper form of house, for in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox fashion. But it is not the 342 ordinary Nāyar's house that one sees all over Malabar. The ordinary house is roughly of the shape here indicated. Invariably there is an upper storey. There are no doors, and only a few tiny windows opening to the west. Men sleep at one end, women [513] at the other, each having their own staircase. Around the house there is



342 always shade from the many trees and palms. Every
house is in its own seclusion."

Concerning Nāyar dwellings, Mr. N. Subramani
Aiyar writes that "the houses of the Nāyar, standing
in a separate compound, have been by many writers
supposed to have been designed with special reference
to the requirements of offence and defence, and Major
Welsh states that the saying that every man's house is
[244] his castle is well verified here. The higher ambition of
the Nāyar is, as has frequently been said, to possess
a garden, wherein he can grow, without trouble or
expense, the few necessaries of his existence. The
garden surrounding the house is surrounded by a hedge
or strong fence. At the entrance is an out-house, or
patipura, which must have served as a kind of guard-
[356] room in mediæval times. In poorer houses its place is
[237] taken by a roofed door, generally provided with a stile
to keep out cattle. The courtyard is washed with cow-
[532] dung, and diverse figures are drawn with white chalk
346 on the fence. Usually there are three out-houses, a
[343] vadakkettu on the north side serving as a kitchen, a
cattle-shed, and a tekketu on the southern side, where
[164] some family spirit is located. These are generally those
of Maruta, *i.e.*, some member of the family who has died
of small-pox. A sword or other weapon, and a seat or
other emblem is located within this out-house, which is
also known by the names of gurusala (the house of a
saint), kalari (military training-ground), and daivappura
[782] (house of a deity). The tekketu is lighted up every
evening, and periodical offerings are made to propitiate
351 the deities enshrined within. In the south-west corner
[312] is the serpent kavu (grove), and by its side a tank for
[245] bathing purposes. Various useful trees are grown in the
garden, such as the jack, areca palm, cocoanut, plantain,
tamarind and mango.

tamarind, and mango. The whole house is known as
vitu. The houses are built on various models, such as 342
pattayappura, nālukettu, ettukettu, and kuttikettu."

Concerning the dress of the Nāyars, Mr. N. 241
Subramani Aiyar writes that "the males dress themselves in a mundu (cloth), a loose lower garment, and a towel. A neriyatu, or light cloth of fine texture with coloured border, is sometimes worn round the mundu on festive occasions. Coats and caps are recent introductions, [177]
but are eschewed by the orthodox as unnational. It is noted by Mr. Logan that 'the women clothe themselves in a single white cloth of fine texture, reaching from the waist to the knees, and occasionally, when abroad, they throw over the shoulder and bosom another similar cloth. But by custom the Nāyar women go uncovered from the waist. Upper garments indicate lower caste, or [564]
sometimes, by a strange reversal of Western notions, immodesty.' Edward Ives, who came to Anjengo about 1740, observes that 'the groves on each bank of the river are chiefly planted with cocoanut trees, and have been inhabited by men and women in almost a pure state of nature, for they go with their breasts and bellies entirely naked. This custom prevails universally throughout [564]
every caste from the poorest planter of rice to the [184]
daughter or consort of the king upon the throne.'" [According to ancient custom, Nāyar women in Travancore used to remove their body-cloth in the presence of the Royal Family. But, since 1856, this custom has [576]
been abolished, by a proclamation during the reign of [643]
H.H. Vanchi Bala Rāma Varma Kulasakhara Perumal Bhagiodya Rāma Varma. In a critique on the Indian Census Report, 1901, Mr. J. D. Rees observes* that

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* Nineteenth Century, 1904.

291 "if the Census Commissioner had enjoyed the privilege
of living among the Nāyars, he would not have accused
them of an 'excess of females.' The most beautiful
women in India, if numerous, could never be excessive."
Concerning Nāyar females, Pierre Loti writes* that
"les femmes ont presque toutes les traits d'une finesse
particulière. Elles se font des bandeaux a la Vierge, et,
avec le reste de leurs cheveux, très noirs et très lisses,
composent une espèce de galette ronde qui se porte au
sommet de la tête, en avant et de côté, retombant un
peu vers le front comme une petite toque cavalièrement
posée, en contraste sur l'ensemble de leur personne qui
515 demeure toujours grave et hiératique."] The Nāyars are
particularly cleanly. Buchanan writes that "the higher
ranks of the people of Malayala use very little clothing,
[824] but are remarkably clean in their persons. Cutaneous
[302] disorders are never observed except among slaves and
the lowest orders, and the Nāyar women are remarkably
careful, repeatedly washing with various saponaceous
plants to keep their hair and skins from every impurity."
296 The washerman is constantly in requisition. No dirty
292 cloths are ever worn. When going for temple worship,
the Nāyar women dress themselves in the tattu form by
drawing the right corner of the hind fold of the cloth
between the thighs, and fastening it at the back. The
cloth is about ten cubits long and three broad, and worn
301 in two folds. The oldest ornament of the Nāyar women
is the necklace called nāgapatam, the pendants of
which resemble a cobra's hood. The Nāyar women
wear no ornament on the head, but decorate the hair
with flowers. The nāgapatam, and several other forms
of neck ornament, such as kazhultila, nalupanti, puttali,

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* L'Inde (sans les Anglais).

chelakkamotiram, amatāli, arumpumani, and kumilatāli 301
are fast vanishing. The kuttu-minnu is worn on the [588]
neck for the first time by a girl when her tāli-kettu is
celebrated. This ornament is also called gnali. Prior
to the tāli-kettu ceremony, the girls wear a kāsu or
sovereign. The inseparable neck ornament of a Nāyar
woman in modern days is the addiyal, to which a
patakkam is attached. The only ornament for the ears
is the takka or toda. After the lobes have been dilated [304]
at the karnavedha ceremony, and dilated, a big leaden
ring is inserted in them. The nose ornament of women
is called mukkuthi, from which is suspended a gold wire
called gnattu. No ornament is worn in the right nostril.
The wearing of gold bangles on the wrists has been
long the fashion among South Indian Hindu females of
almost all high castes. Round the waist Nāyar women
wear chains of gold and silver, and, by the wealthy, gold
belts called kachchapuram are worn. Anklets were not [177]
worn in former times, but at the present day the kolusu
and padasaram of the Tamilians have been adopted. So,
too, the time-honoured toda is sometimes set aside in
favour of the Tamil kammal, an ornament of much smaller
size. Canter Visscher (who was Chaplain at Cochin in 291
the eighteenth century) must have been much struck by
the expenditure of the Nāyar women on their dress, for
he wrote * 'there is not one of any fortune who does
not own as many as twenty or thirty chests full of
robes made of silver and other valuable materials, for
it would be a disgrace in their case to wear the same
dress two or three days in succession'."

It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the Venetian sequin, 177
which probably first found its way to Malabar in the days 301

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* Letters from Malabar.

177 of Vasco da Gama and Albuquerque, is one of those coins
301 which, having ſound ſavour with a people, is used persistently in ornamentation long after it has passed out of currency. So fond are the Malayālis of the sequin that to this day there is quite a large trade in imitations of the coin for purposes of ornament. Such is the persistence of its use that the trade extends to brass and even copper imitation of the sequins. The former are often seen to
[554] bear the legend 'Made in Austria.' The Nāyars wear none but the gold sequins. The brass imitations are worn by the women of the inferior races. If one asks the ordinary Malayāli, say a Nāyar, what persons are represented on the sequin, one gets for answer that they are Rāma and Sīta ; between them a cocoanut tree."

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789 In connection with the wearing of charms by Nāyars Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "One individual (a
[777] Kiriattil Nāyar) wore two rings made of an amalgamation of gold and copper, called tambāk, on the ring finger of
[325] the right hand for good luck. Tambāk rings are lucky rings. It is a good thing to wash the face with the hand, on which is a tambāk ring. Another wore two rings of the pattern called trilōham (lit. metals) on the ring finger of each hand. Each of these was made during an eclipse.
301 Yet another wore a silver ring as a vow, which was to be
789 given up at the next festival at Kottiūr, a famous festival
782 in North Malabar. The right nostril of a Sūdra Nāyar
(304) was slit vertically as if for the insertion of a jewel. His mother miscarried in her first pregnancy, so, according to custom, he, the child of her second pregnancy, had his nose slit. Another wore a silver bangle. He had a wound in his arm which was long in healing, so he made a vow to the god at Tirupati (in the North Arcot district), that, if his arm was healed, he would give up the bangle at the Tirupati temple. He intended to send the bangle there by a messenger.

bangle there by a messenger. An Akattu Charna Nāyar 301 789
wore an amulet to keep off the spirit of a Brāhman who
died by drowning. Another had a silver ring, on which
a piece of a bristle from an elephant's tail was arranged."

Tattooing is said by Mr. Subramani Aiyar not to be 304
favoured by North Travancore Nāyars, and to be only
practiced by Nāyar women living to the south of Quilon.
Certain accounts trace it to the invasion of Travancore [177]
by a Moghul Sirdar in 1680 A.D. In modern times it
has become rare. The operation is performed by women [564]
of the Odda or Kurava caste before a girl reaches the
twelfth year.

Concerning the religious worship of the Nāyars, Mr. 776
Subramani Aiyar writes that "Buchanan notes that the
proper deity of the Nāyars is Vishnu, though they wear
the mark of Siva on their foreheads. By this is merely
meant that they pay equal reverence to both Siva and
Vishnu, being Smartas converted to the tenets of Saṅkaracharya.
Besides worshipping the higher Hindu deities,
the Nāyars also manifest their adoration for several
minor ones, such as Mātan, Utayam, Yakshi, Chattan,
Chantakarnan, Murti, Maruta, and Arukula. Most of [532]
these have granite representations, or at least such [778]
emblems as a sword or a cane, and are provided with
a local habitation. Besides these, persons who have met [775]
with accidental death, and girls who have died before [766]
their tāli-tying ceremony, are specially worshipped
under the designations of Kazhichchavu and Kannichchavu.
Magicians are held in some fear, and talismanic [791]
amulets are attached to the waist by members of both [789]
sexes. Kuttichattan, the mischievous imp of Malabar,
is supposed to cause much misery. Various spirits [782]
are worshipped on the Tiruvonam day in the month of
Avani (August-September), on the Uchcharam or 28th

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[782] day of Makarom (January-February), and on some
Tuesdays and Fridays. Kolam-tullal, Velan-pravarti,
Ayiramaniyam-tullel, Chavuttu, Tila-homam, and a host
of other ceremonies are performed with a view to
propitiate spirits, and the assistance of the Kaniyans
[825] and Vẽlans is largely sought. Serpents, too, whose
images are located on the north-western side of most
gardens in Central and North Travancore, receive a
[821] large share of adoration. The sun is an object of
[782] universal worship. Though the Gayatri cannot be
studied, or the Sandhyavandanam of the Brãhmans
performed, an offering of water to the sun after a bath,
to the accompaniment of some hymn, is made by almost
every pious Nãyar. The Panchakshara is learnt from
538 an Ilayatu, and repeated daily. A large portion of the
[517] time of an old Nãyar is spent in reading the Rãmayana,
Bhagavata and Mahãbharata, rendered into Malayãlam
by Tunchattu Ezhuttachhan, the greatest poet of the
Malabar coast. Many places in Travancore are pointed
out as the scene of memorable incidents in the Rãmayana
and Mahãbharata. There are many temples, tanks,
and mountains connected with Rãma's march to the
capital of Rãvana. Equally important are the singular
feats said to have been performed by the five Pãndavas
during the time of their wanderings in the jungles before
the battle of Kurukshetra. Bhima especially has built
temples, raised up huge mountains, and performed
many other gigantic tasks in the country. There are
some village temples owned exclusively by the Nãyars,
where all the karakkars (villagers) assemble on special
623 occasions. A very peculiar socio-religious ceremony per-
178 formed here is the kũttam. This is a village council,
574 held at the beginning of every month for the adminis-
tration of the communal affairs of the caste, though, at

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the present day, a sumptuous feast at the cost of each 178
villager in rotation, and partaken of by all assembled, 574
and a small offering to the temple, are all that remains
to commemorate it. Astrology is believed in, and some 787
of its votaries are spoken of as Trikalagnas, or those
who know the past, present, and future. It is due
to a curse of Siva on the science of his son, who made
bold by its means to predict even the future of his
father, that occasional mistakes are said to occur in
astrological calculations. Sorcery and witchcraft are 754
believed to be potent powers for evil. To make a
person imbecile, to paralyse his limbs, to cause him
to lavish all his wealth upon another, to make him deaf
and dumb, and, if need be, even to make an end of him,
are not supposed to be beyond the powers of the
ordinary wizard. Next to wizardry and astrology, 787
palmistry, omens, and the lizard science are generally
believed in. In the category of good omens are placed
the elephant, a pot full of water, sweetmeats, fruit, fish
and flesh, images of gods, kings, a cow with its calf,
married women, tied bullocks, gold lamps, ghee, milk, and
so on. Under the head of bad omens come the donkey,
a broom, buffalo, untied bullock, barber, widow, patient,
cat, washerman, etc. The worst of all omens is [825]
beyond question to allow a cat to cross one's path. An
odd number of Nâyars, and an even number of Brâhmans,
are good omens, the reverse being particularly bad.
On the Vinayaka-chaturthi day in the month of Avani, [821].
no man is permitted to look at the rising moon under
penalty of incurring unmerited obloquy.

"The chief religious festival of the Nâyars is Ōnam, 796
which takes place in the last week of August, or first
week of September. It is a time of rejoicing and merriment. Father Paulinus, writing in the latter half of the

796 eighteenth century, observes that about the tenth of September the rain ceases in Malabar. All nature seems then as if renovated; the flowers again shoot up, and the trees bloom. In a word, this season is the same as that which Europeans call spring. The Ōnam festival is said, therefore, to have been instituted for the purpose of soliciting from the gods a happy and fruitful [237] year. It continues for eight days, and during that time the Indians are accustomed to adorn their houses with [825] flowers, and to daub them over with cow-dung, because the cow is a sacred animal, dedicated to the Goddess Lakshmi, the Ceres of India. On this occasion they also put on new clothes, throw away all their old earthenware, and replace it by new. Ōnam is, according to some, the annual celebration of the Malabar new year, which first began with Cheraman Perumal's departure for Mecca. But, with the majority of orthodox Hindus, it is the day of the annual visit of Mahabali to his country, which he used to govern so wisely and well before his overthrow. There is also a belief that it is Maha-Vishnu who, on Ōnam day, pays a visit to this mundane universe, for the just and proper maintenance of which he is specially responsible. In some North Malabar title-deeds and horoscopes, Mr. Logan says, the year is taken as ending with the day previous to Ōnam. This fact, he notes, is quite reconcileable with the other explanation, which alleges that the commencement of the era coincides with Perumal's departure for Arabia, if it is assumed, as is not improbable, that the day on which he sailed was Thiruvōnam day, on which acknowledgment of fealty should have been made. Ōnam, it may be observed, is a contraction of Thiruvōnam which is the asterism [824] of the second day of the festival. Throughout the festival, boys from five to fifteen years of age go out

early in the morning to gather flowers, of which the 796 824 [532]
kadali is the most important. On their return, they sit in front of the tulasi (sacred basil) mandapam, make a carpet-like bed of the blossoms which they have collected, and place a clay image of Ganapati in the centre. A writer in the Calcutta Review * describes how having set out at dawn to gather blossoms, the children return with their beautiful spoils by 9 or 10 A.M., and then the daily decoration begins. The chief decoration consists of a carpet made out of the gathered blossoms, the smaller ones being used in their entirety, while the large flowers, and one or two varieties of foliage of different tints, are pinched up into little pieces to serve the decorator's purpose. This flower carpet is invariably made in the centre of the clean strip of yard in front of the neat house. Often it is a beautiful work of art, accomplished with a delicate touch and a highly artistic sense of tone and blending. The carpet completed, a miniature pandal (booth), hung with little festoons, is erected over it, and at all hours of the day neighbours look in, to admire and criticise the beautiful handiwork."

"Various field sports, of which foot-ball is the chief, 796 526
are indulged in during the Ōnam festival. To quote Paulinus once more, the men, particularly those who are young, form themselves into parties, and shoot at each other with arrows. These arrows are blunted, but exceedingly strong, and are discharged with such force that a considerable number are generally wounded on both sides. These games have a great likeness to the [171]
Ceralia and Juvenalia of the ancient Greeks and Romans."

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* January, 1899.

526 In connection with bows and arrows, Mr. Fawcett writes that "I once witnessed a very interesting game called čitū (čiththu), played by the Nāyars in the southern portion of Kurumbranād during the ten days preceding Ōnam. There is a semi-circular stop-butt, about two feet in the highest part, the centre, and sloping to the ground at each side. The players stand 25 to 30 yards before the concave side of it, one side of the players to the right, the other to the left. There is no restriction of numbers as to sides. Each player is armed with a little bow made of bamboo, about 18 inches in length, and arrows, or what answer for arrows, these being no more than pieces of the midrib of the cocoanut palm leaf, roughly broken off, leaving a little bit of the end to take the place of the feather. In the centre of the stop-butt, on the ground, is placed the target, a piece of the heart of the plantain tree, about 3 inches in diameter, pointed at the top, in which is stuck a small stick convenient for lifting the cheppu, as the mark which is the immediate objective of the players is called. They shoot indiscriminately at the mark, and he who hits it (the little arrows shoot straight, and stick in readily) carries off all the arrows lying on the ground. Each side strives to secure all the arrows, and to deprive the other side of theirs—a sort of 'beggar my neighbour.' He who hits the mark last takes all the arrows; that is, he who hits it, and runs and touches the mark before any one else hits it. As I stood watching, it happened several times that as many as four arrows hit the mark, while the youth who had hit first was running the 25 yards to touch the cheppu. Before he could touch it, as many as four other arrows had struck it, and, of course, he who hit it last and touched the mark secured all the arrows for his side. The game is accompanied by much

shouting, gesticulation and laughter. Those returning, 526
after securing a large number of arrows, turned somersaults, and expressed their joy in saltatory motions." In a note on this game with bows and arrows in Kurumbranad, Mr. E. F. Thomas writes that "the players form themselves into two sides, which shoot alternately at the mark. Beside the mark stand representatives of the two sides. When the mark is hit by a member of either side, on his representative shouting 'Run, man,' he runs up the lists. His object is to seize the mark before it is hit by any one belonging to the other side. If he can do this, his side takes all the arrows which have been shot, and are sticking in the stop-butt. If, on the other hand, the mark is hit by the other side before he reaches it, he may not seize the mark. A member of the other side runs up in his turn to seize the mark if possible before it is hit again by the first side. If he can do this, he takes out, not all the arrows, but only the two which are sticking in the mark. If, while number two is running, the mark is hit a third time, a member of the first side runs up, to seize the mark if possible. The rule is that one or three hits take all the arrows in the stop-butt, two or four only the arrows sticking in the mark. Great excitement is shown by all who take part in the game, which attracts a number of spectators. The game is played every fortnight by Nâyars, Tiyans, Mâppillas, and others. I am told that it is a very old one, and is dying [178]
out. I saw it at Naduvanūr."

The Ōnam games in the south-east of Malabar, in 796
the neighbourhood of Palghat, are said by Mr. Fawcett 526
to be of a rough character, "the tenants of certain jenmis 184
(landlords) turning out each under their own leader, and engaging in sham fights, in which there is much rough play. Here, too, is to be seen a kind of boxing, which

796
526 would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman
[184] pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken
up by the combatants is much the same as that of the
[175] pugiles. The Romans were familiar with Malabar from
about 30 B.C. to the decline of their power.* We may
safely assume that the 3,000 lbs. of pepper, which Alaric
demanded as part of the ransom of Rome when he
besieged the city in the fifth century, came from
Malabar." Swinging on the uzhinjal, and dancing to the
accompaniment of merry songs, are said to be characteristic amusements of the womankind during Ōnam
festival, and, on the Patinaram Makam, or sixteenth day
after Thiruvonam. This amusement is indulged in by
both sexes. It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the cloths
given as Ōnam presents are yellow, or some part of them
[431] is yellow. There must be at least a yellow stripe or a
[174] small patch of yellow in a corner, which suggests a relic
[178] of sun-worship in a form more pronounced than that
which obtains at present. It is a harvest festival, about
the time when the first crop of paddy (rice) is harvested."

796 Concerning another important festival in Malabar,
the Thiruvathira, Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar writes as
follows.† "Thiruvathira is one of the three great
national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off
in the Malayālam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is
essentially a festival in which females are almost exclu-
[176] sively concerned, and lasts for but a single day. The
popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration
[773] of the death of Kâmadêvan, the Cupid of our national
mythology. As recorded in the old Purânas, Kâmadêvan

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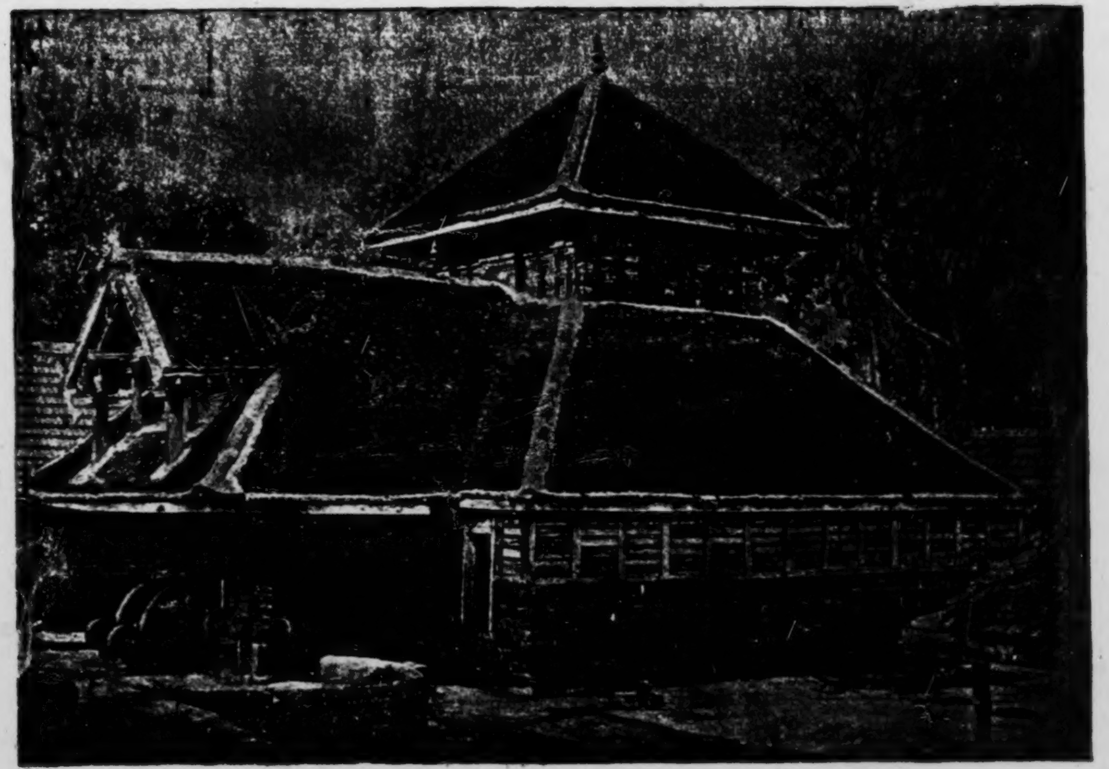
* See Thurston. Catalogue of Roman, etc., Coins, Madras Government Museum, 2nd ed., 1894.

† Malabar and its Folk, 1900.

[facing p. 376]



BHAGAVATI TEMPLE, PANDALŪR.

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[776]
[773]

was destroyed in the burning fire of the third eye of Siva, one of the chief members of our divine Trinity. Hence he is now supposed to have only an ideal or rather spiritual existence, and thus he exerts a powerful influence upon the lower passions of human nature. The memory of this unhappy tragedy is still kept alive among us, particularly the female section, by means of the annual celebration of this important festival. About a week before the day, the festival practically opens. At about four in the morning, every young female of Nair families with pretensions to decency gets out of bed, and takes her bath in a tank. Usually a fairly large number of these young ladies collect at the tank for the purpose. Then all, or almost all of them, plunge in the water, and begin to take part in the singing that is presently to follow. One of them then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song, chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed, and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction, and struck against its surface, so that the water is completely ruffled, and is splashed in all directions, producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged, together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound, and then the leader stops awhile for the others to follow in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza with another, at the same time beating on the water, and so on until the conclusion of the song. All of them make a long pause, and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn, when they rub themselves dry, and come home to dress

796 themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire.
[302] They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a
sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or
ghee, and sometimes with a superficial coating of
[276] antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red
marks down the middle of their foreheads. They also
chew betel, and thus redden their mouths and lips.
[526] They then proceed to the enjoyment of another
prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro on
what is usually known as an uzhinjal, or swing made
[262] of bamboo. On the festival day, after the morning bath
is over, they take a light meal, and in the noon the
family dinner is voraciously attacked, the essential and
almost universal ingredients being ordinary ripe plantain
fruits, and a delicious preparation of arrowroot powder
purified and mixed with jaggery (crude sugar) or sugar,
and also cocoanut. Then, till evening, dancing and
[593] merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in. The husband
population are inexcusably required to be present in the
wives' houses before evening, as they are bound to do on
[586] the Ōnam and Vishu occasions. Failure to do this is
looked upon as a step, or rather the first step, on the
part of the defaulting husband towards a final separa-
[132] tion or divorce from the wife. Despite the rigour of
the bleak December season during which the festival
commonly falls, heightened inevitably by the constant
blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened
frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure
from their early baths, and their frolics in the water.
The biting cold of the season, which makes their persons
shiver and quiver, becomes to them in the midst of all
their ecstatic frolics an additional source of pleasure.
The two items described above, viz., the swinging and
beating of the water, have each their own distinctive

significance. The former typifies the attempt which 796
these maidens make in order to hang themselves on [776]
these instruments, and destroy their lives in consequence
of the lamented demise of their sexual deity Kāmadēvan.
The beating on the water symbolises their beating their
chests in expression of their deep-felt sorrow caused by
their Cupid's death."

Yet another important festival, Vishu, is thus
described by Mr. Gopal Panikkar. "Vishu, like the
Ōnam and Thiruvathira festivals, is a remarkable event
among us. Its duration is limited to one day. The 1st
of Mētam (some day in April) is the unchangeable day,
on which it falls. It is practically the astronomical new
year's day. This was one of the periods when, in olden 796
days, the subjects of ruling princes or authorities in 651
Malabar, under whom their lots were cast, were expected
to bring their new year's offerings to such princes.
Failure to comply with the customary and time-consecrated demands was visited with royal displeasure,
resulting in manifold varieties of oppression. The [648]
British Government, finding this was a great burden,
pressing rather heavily upon the people, obtained as
far back as 1790 a binding promise from those Native
Princes that such exactions of presents from the people
should be discontinued thereafter. Consequently the [178]
festival is now shorn of much of its ancient sanctity and
splendour. But suggestive survivals of the same are
still to be found in the presents, which tenants and
dependents bring to leading families on the day previous
to the Vishu. Being the commencement of a new year, 796
native superstition surrounds it with a peculiar solemn
importance. It is believed that a man's whole prosperity [777]
in life depends upon the nature, auspicious or otherwise, [787]
of the first things that he happens to fix his eyes upon

796
777 on this particular morning. According to Nair, and
787 even general Hindu mythology, there are certain objects which possess an inherent inauspicious character. For instance, ashes, firewood, oil, and a lot of similar objects are inauspicious ones, which will render him who chances to notice them first fare badly in life for the whole year, and their obnoxious effects will be removed only on his seeing holy things, such as reigning princes, oxen, cows, gold, and such like, on the morning of the next new year. The effects of the sight of these various materials are said to apply even to the attainment of objects by a man starting on a special errand, who happens for the first time to look at them after starting. However, with this view, almost every family religiously takes care to prepare the most sightworthy objects on the new year morning. Therefore, on the previous night they prepare what is known as a kani. A small circular bell-metal vessel is taken, and some holy objects are systematically arranged inside it. A grandha or old book made of palmyra leaves, a gold ornament, a new-washed cloth, some 'unprofitably gay' flowers of the konna tree (*Cassia Fistula*), a measure of rice, a so-called looking-glass made of bell-metal, and a few other things, are all tastefully arranged in the vessel, and placed in a prominent room inside the house. On either side of this vessel two brass or bell-metal lamps, filled with cocoanut oil clear as diamond sparks, are kept burning, and a small plank of wood, or some other seat, is placed in front of it. At about 5 o'clock in the morning of the day, some one who has got up first wakes up the inmates, both male and female, of the house, and takes them blindfolded, so that they may not gaze at anything else, to the seat near the kani. The members are seated, one after another, in the seat, and

are then, and not till then, asked to open their eyes, and 796 777
carefully look at the kani. Then each is made to look 187
at some venerable member of the house, or sometimes
a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins
of the house begin to fire small crackers, which they
have bought and stored for the occasion. The kani 796
is then taken round the place from house to house for
the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to
prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the
noise of the crackers, the morning breaks, and preparations are begun for the morning meal. This meal is [264]
in some parts confined to rice kanji (gruel) with a grand [262]
appendage of other eatable substances, and in others to
ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case
on a grand scale. Immediately the day dawns, the heads [431]
of the families give to almost all the junior members and
servants of the household, and to wives and children,
money presents to serve as their pocket-money. In the
more numerically large families, similar presents are
also made by the heads of particular branches of the
same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants.
One other item connected with the festival deserves
mention. On the evening of the previous day, about [556]
four or five o'clock, most well-to-do families distribute [431]
paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities,
and some other accessories to the family workmen,
whether they live on the family estates or not. In
return for this, these labourers bring with them for
presentation the fruits of their own labours, such as
vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals (fruit of *Solanum
Melongena*), etc., according as their respective circumstances permit. With the close of the midday meal [264]
the festival practically concludes. In some families, after ea.

In some families, after
796 the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds
526 are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of
535 the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other
[524] prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are
also resorted to."

264 On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as
515 follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by
the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his
782 food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It
783 is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the
[522] temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed;
generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere
[564] near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any
inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house
from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks
newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is
pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he
[683] can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in
his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste
thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly
[656] with a sword; there would be no words. Now that
the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms
[671] Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a
[178] law system under which high and low are rated alike,
the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious
grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him
as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not
diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the
same way.

796 "I will attempt a description of the ceremonial
[773] observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near
Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where
Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain
an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which

event the festival is held yearly to Bhagavati and her 796
followers. The festival lasts for seven days. When I [773]
visited it in 1895, the last day was on the 31st of March.
Before daybreak of the first day, the ordinary temple
priest, a Mûssad, will leave the temple after having
swept it and made it clean; and (also before daybreak) [793]
five Nambûtiris will enter it, bearing with them sudhi
kalasam. The kalasam is on this occasion made of the [237]
five products of the cow (panchagavyam), together with [779]
some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree, and darbha
grass, all in one vessel. Before being brought to the [789]
temple, mantrams or magic verses will have been said
over it. The contents of the vessel are sprinkled all
about the temple, and a little is put in the well, thus
purifying the temple and the well. The Nambûtiris [793]
will then perform the usual morning worship, and, either
immediately after it or very soon afterwards, they leave
the temple, and the Mûssad returns and resumes his
office. The temple belongs to four taravâds, and no [613]
sooner has it been purified than the Kâranavans of [783]
these four taravâds, virtually the joint-owners of the
temple (known as Urâlas) present to the temple servant
(Pishârodi) the silver flag of the temple, which has been
in the custody of one of them since the last festival.
The Pishârodi receives it, and hoists it in front of the
temple (to the east), thus signifying that the festival has
begun. While this is being done, emphasis and grandeur [411]
is given to the occasion by the firing off of miniature [201]
mortars such as are common at all South Indian festivals.
After the flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the
temple small flags of coloured cloth. For the next [788]
few days there is nothing particular to be done beyond
the procession morning, noon, and night; the image of
Bhagavati being carried on an elephant to an orchestra

796 of drums, and cannonade of the little mortars. All those
who are present are supposed to be fed from the temple.
[564] There is a large crowd. On the morning of the fifth
day, a man of the washerman (Vannān) caste will
[203] announce to the neighbours by beat of tom-tom that
[788] there will be a procession of Bhagavati issuing from the
794 gates of the temple, and passing round about. Like all
those who are in any way connected with the temple,
796 this man's office is hereditary, and he lives to a small
564 extent on the bounty of the temple, *i.e.*, he holds a little
[428] land on nominal terms from the temple property, in
[425] consideration for which he must fulfil certain requirements for the temple, as on occasions of festivals. His
office also invests him with certain rights in the community. In the afternoon of the fifth day, the Vannān
and a Manūtan, the one following the other, bring two
umbrellas to the temple; the former bringing one of
cloth, and the latter one of cadjan (palm leaves). I
am not sure whether the cloth umbrella has been in
the possession of the Vannān, but think it has. At all
events, when he brings it to the temple, it is in thorough
repair—a condition for which he is responsible. The
cadjan umbrella is a new one. Following these two as
they walk solemnly, each with his umbrella, is a large
crowd. There are processions of Bhagavati on the
elephant encircling the temple thrice in the morning, at
[326] noon, and at night. Early on the sixth day, the headman of the Mukkuvans (fishermen), who by virtue of
his headship is called the Arayan, together with the
blacksmith and the goldsmith, comes to the temple
followed by a crowd, but accompanied by no orchestra of
drums. To the Arayan is given half a sack of rice for
himself and his followers. A silver umbrella belonging
to the temple is handed over to him, to be used when

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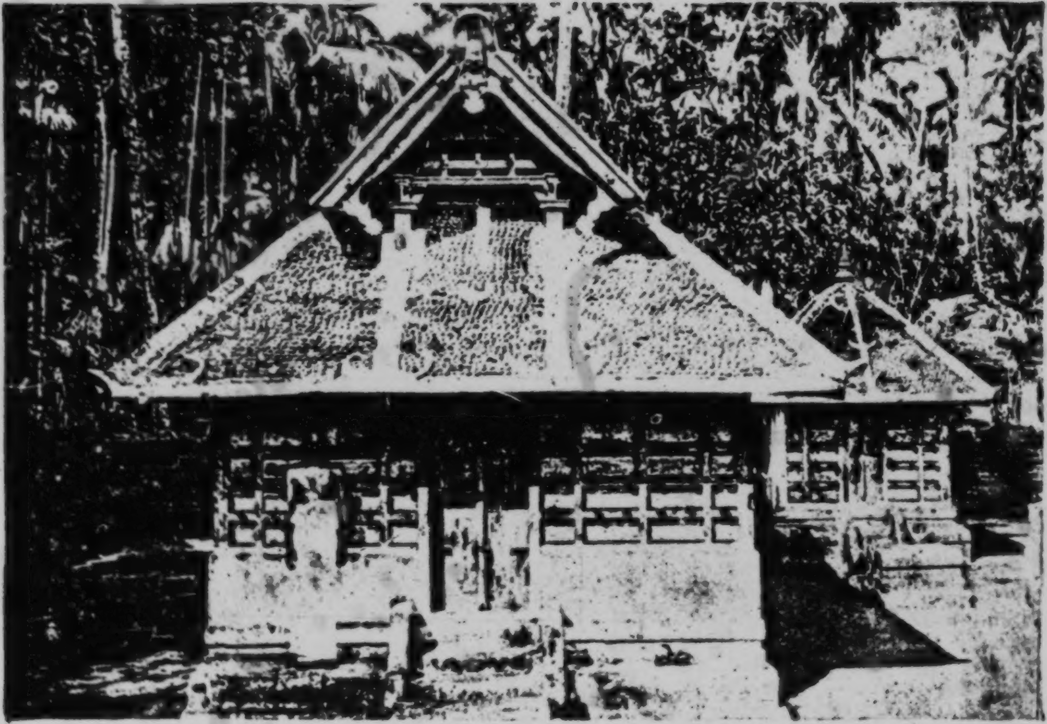
he comes to the temple again in the evening. To the 794
blacksmith is given the temple sword. The goldsmith 564
receives the silver umbrella from the Arayan, and [326].
executes any repairs that may be needful, and, in like
manner, the blacksmith looks to the sword. In the [482]
afternoon, the headman of the Tiyans, called the Tandān,
comes to the temple followed by two of his castemen [782]
carrying slung on a pole over their shoulders three
bunches of young cocoanuts—an appropriate offering, the
Tiyans being those whose ordinary profession is climbing
the cocoanut palm, drawing the toddy, securing the
cocoanuts, etc. This time there will be loud drumming,
and a large crowd with the Tandān, and in front of him
are men dancing, imitating sword play with sticks and
shields, clanging the shields, pulling at bows as if firing
off imaginary arrows, the while shouting and yelling
madly. Then come the blacksmith and the goldsmith [326]
with the sword. Following comes the Arayan with the
silver umbrella to the accompaniment of very noisy
drumming, in great state under a canopy of red cloth held
lengthways by two men, one before, the other behind.
The procession of Bhagavati continues throughout the
night, and ceases at daybreak. These six days of the 796
festival are called Vilākku. A word about the drumming. 534
The number of instrumentalists increases as the festival
goes on, and on the last day I counted fifty, all Nāyars.
The instruments were the ordinary tom-tom, a skin
stretched tight over one side of a circular wooden band,
about 1½ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in width,
and the common long drum much narrower at the ends
than in the middle; and there were (I think) a few of
those narrow in the middle, something like an hour-glass
cut short at both ends. They are beaten with
curved drum sticks, thicker at the end held in the hand.

[facing p. 385]



AIYAPPAN TEMPLE.

346

534 796 The accuracy with which they were played on, never a
[533] wrong note although the rhythm was changed perpetually, was truly amazing. And the crescendo and
diminuendo, from a perfect fury of wildness to the
gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially
when we consider the fact that there was no visible
796 794 leader of this strange orchestra. Early on the seventh
564 and last day, when the morning procession is over, there
comes to the temple a man of the Pānan caste (umbrella-
[293] makers and devil-dancers). He carries a small cadjan
umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round
the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the
cocoanut palm. His approach is heralded and noised
just as in the case of the others on the previous day.
The umbrella should have a long handle, and, with it in
his hand, he performs a dance before the temple. The
temple is situated within a hollow square enclosure,
which none in caste below the Nāyar is permitted to
enter. To the north, south, east, and west, there is a
level entrance into the hollow square, and beyond this
entrance no man of inferior caste may go. The Pānan
receives about 10 lbs. of raw rice for his performance.
In the afternoon, a small crowd of Vettuvars come to
the temple, carrying with them swords, and about ten
small baskets made of cocoanut palm leaves, containing
[422] salt. These baskets are carried slung on a pole. The
[685] use of salt here is obscure.* I remember a case of a
Nāyar's house having been plundered, the idol knocked
[578] down, and salt put in the place where it should have
[786] stood. The act was looked on as most insulting. The
Vettuvans dance and shout in much excitement, cutting
their heads with their own swords in their frenzy. Some

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* The Vettuvans were once salt-makers.

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of them represent devils or some kind of inferior evil 796
spirits, and dance madly under the influence of the 564
spirits which they represent. Then comes the Arayan [326]
as on the previous day with his little procession, and
lastly comes the blacksmith with the sword. The procession
in the evening is a great affair. Eight elephants, 796
which kept line beautifully, took part in it when I witnessed 231
it. One of them, very handsomely caparisoned, 788
had on its back a priest (Mūssad) carrying a sword [793]
smothered in garlands of red flowers representing the
goddess. The elephant bearing the priest is bedizened
on the forehead with two golden discs, one on each
side of the forehead, and over the centre of the forehead
hangs a long golden ornament. These discs on the
elephant's forehead are common in Malabar in affairs of
ceremony. The Māppilla poets are very fond of comparing [538]
a beautiful girl's breasts to these cup-like discs.
The elephant bears other jewels, and over his back is a
large canopy-like red cloth richly wrought. Before the [411]
elephant walked a Nāyar carrying in his right hand
in front of him a sword of the kind called nāndakam
smeared with white (probably sandal) paste. To its
edge, at intervals of a few inches, are fastened tiny bells,
so that, when it is shaken, there is a general jingle.
Just before the procession begins, there is something 796
for the Tiyans to do. Four men of this caste having 564
with them pūkalasams (flower kalasams), and five 794
having jannakalasams, run along the west, north, and 778
east sides of the temple outside the enclosure, shouting
and making a noise more like the barking of dogs than
anything else. The kalasams contain arrack (liquor), [273]
which is given to the temple to be used in the ceremonies.
Members of certain families only are allowed [465]
to perform in this business, and for what they do each

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[465] man receives five edangālis of rice from the temple, and
a small piece of the flesh of the goat which is sacrificed
later. These nine men eat only once a day during the
[934] festival; they do no work, remaining quietly at home
[841] unless when at the temple; they cannot approach any one
of caste lower than their own; they cannot cohabit with
women; and they cannot see a woman in menstruation
during these days. A crowd of Tiyans join more or
less in this, rushing about and barking like dogs, making
a hideous noise. They too have kalasams, and, when
they are tired of rushing and barking, they drink the
arrack in them. These men are always under a vow.
[782] In doing what they do, they fulfil their vow for the
benefit they have already received from the goddess—
796 cure from sickness as a rule. To the west of the
564 temple is a circular pit—it was called the fire-pit, but
there was no fire in it—and this pit all the Tiyan women
of the neighbourhood circumambulate, passing from
west round by north, three times, holding on the head
a pewter plate, on which are a little rice, bits of plantain
leaves and cocoanut, and a burning wick. As each
woman completes her third round, she stands for a
moment at the western side, facing east, and throws the
[782] contents of the plate into the pit. She then goes to the
western gate of the enclosure, and puts down her plate
for an instant while she makes profound salaam to the
796 goddess ere going away. Now the procession starts
776 out from the temple, issuing from the northern gate,
788 and for a moment confronts a being so strange that he
demands description. Of the many familiar demons of
the Malayālis, the two most intimate are Kuttichchāttan
and Gulikan, who are supposed to have assisted Kāli
(who is scarcely the Kāli of Brāhmanism) in overcoming the Āsura, and on the occasion of this festival these

788

demons dance before her. Gulikan is represented by 796
the Vannān and Kuttichchāttan by the Manūtan who 776
have been already mentioned, and who are under like
restrictions with the nine Tiyans. I saw poor Gulikan 796
being made up, the operation occupying five or six 776
hours or more before his appearance. I asked who 536
he was, and was told he was a devil. He looked mild 788
enough, but then his make-up had just begun. He was lying flat on the ground close by the north-east entrance of the enclosure, where presently he was to dance, a man painting his face to make it hideous and frightful. This done, the hair was dressed; large bangles were put on his arms, covering them almost completely from the shoulder to the wrist; and his head and neck were swathed and decorated. A wooden platform arrangement, from which hung a red ornamented skirt, was fastened to his hips. There was fastened to his back an elongated Prince of Wales' feathers arrangement, the top of which reached five feet above his head, and he was made to look like nothing human. Kuttichchāttan was treated in much the same manner. As the procession issues from the northern gate of the temple, where it is joined by the elephants, Gulikan stands in the northern entrance of the enclosure (which he cannot enter), facing it, and a halt is made for three minutes, while Gulikan dances. The poor old man who represented this fearful being, grotesquely terrible in his wonderful metamorphosis, must have been extremely glad when his dance was concluded, for the mere weight and uncomfortable arrangement of his paraphernalia must have been extremely exhausting. It was with difficulty that he could move at all, let alone dance. The procession passes round by east, where, at the entrance of the enclosure, Kuttichchāttan gives his

796 dance, round by south to the westward, and, leaving 788 the enclosure, proceeds to a certain banyan tree, under 776 which is a high raised platform built up with earth 536 and stones. Preceding the procession at a distance of 796 fifty yards are the nine men of the Tiyan caste men- 564 tioned already, carrying kalasams on their heads, and a 788 crowd of women of the same caste, each one carrying a pewter plate, larger than the plates used when encircling the fire pit, on which are rice, etc., and the burning wick as before. The plate and its contents are on this occasion, as well as before, called talapōli. I could not make out that anything in particular is done at the banyan tree, and the procession soon returns to the temple, the nine men and the Tiyan women following, [782] carrying their kalasams and talapōli. On the way, a number of cocks are given in sacrifice by people under a vow. In the procession are a number of devil-dancers, garlanded with white flowers of the pagoda tree mixed with red, jumping, gesticulating, and shouting, in an avenue of the crowd in front of the elephant bearing the sword. The person under a vow holds the cock towards one of these devil-dancers, who, never ceasing his gyrations and contortions, presently seizes its head, wrings [755] it off, and flings it high in the air. The vows which are fulfilled by this rude decapitation of cocks have been made in order to bring about cure for some ailment. The procession passes through the temple yard from west to east, and proceeds half a mile to a banyan tree, under which, like the other, there is a high raised platform. When passing by the temple, the Tiyan women empty the contents of their plates in the fire pit as before, and the nine men hand over the arrack in their kalasams to the temple servants. Let me note here the curious distribution of the rice which is heaped in the fire pit.

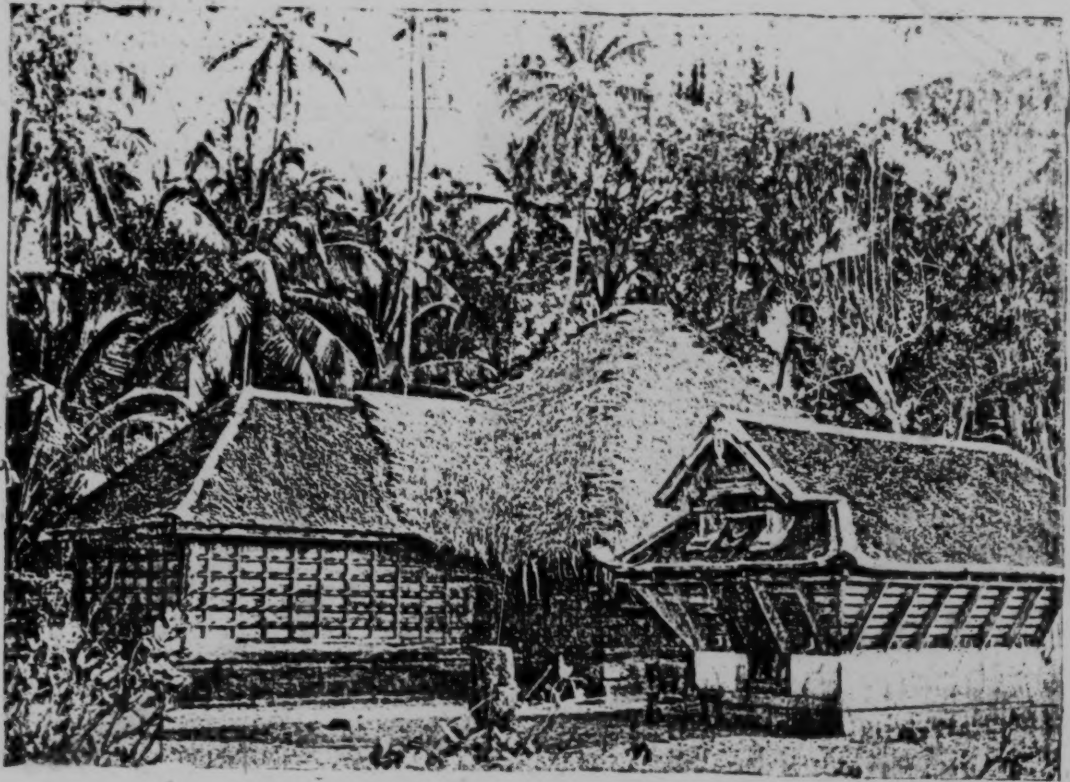
Two-thirds of it go to the four Tiyans who carried the 796 564
pūkalasams, and one-third to the five who carried the 788
jannakalasams. Returning to the procession, we find
it at the raised platform to the east of the temple. On [804]
this platform have been placed already an ordinary bamboo quart-like measure of paddy (unhusked rice), and one of rice, each covered with a plantain leaf. The principal devil-dancer takes a handful of rice and paddy, and flings it all around. The procession then visits in turn the gates of the gardens of the four owners of the temple. At each is a measure of rice and a measure of paddy covered with plantain leaves, with a small lamp or burning wick beside them, and the devil-dancer throws a handful towards the house. The procession then finds its way to a tree to the west, under which, on the platform, is now a measure of paddy and a lamp. Some Brāhmans repeat mantrams, and the elephant, the priest on his back and the sword in his hand, all three are supposed to tremble violently. Up to this time the procession has moved leisurely at a very slow march. Now, starting suddenly, it proceeds at a run to the temple, where the priest descends quickly from the elephant, and is taken inside the temple by the Mūssad priests. He, who has been carrying the sword all this time, places it on the sill of the door of the room in which
it is kept for worship, and prostrates before it. The [778]
sword then shakes itself for fifteen minutes, until the chief priest stays its agitation by sprinkling on it some tirtam fluid made sacred by having been used for anointing
the image of the goddess. This done, the chief amongst 796
the devil-dancers will, with much internal tumult as well 787
as outward convolutions, say in the way of oracle whether the dēvi has been pleased with the festival in her honour, or not. As he pronounces this oracular utterance, he falls

796
[787] in a sort of swoon, and everyone, excepting only the
priests and temple servants, leaves the place as quickly
796 as possible. The sheds which have been erected for
782 temporary habitation around the temple will be quickly
demolished, and search will be made round about to
make sure that no one remains near while the mystic rite
of sacrifice is about to be done. When the whole place
has been cleared, the four owners of the temple, who
have stayed, hand over each a goat with a rope tied
round its neck to the chief priest, and, as soon as they
[793] have done so, they depart. There will remain now in the
temple three Mūssads, one drummer (Marayar), and two
[534] temple servants. The reason for all this secrecy seems
[794] to lie in objection to let it be known generally that any
sacrifice is done. I was told again and again that there
796 was no such thing. It is a mystic secret. The Mūssad
789 priests repeat mantrams over the goats for an hour as a
782 preliminary to the sacrifice. Then the chief priest dons
793 a red silk cloth, and takes in his hand a chopper-like
sword in shape something like a small bill-hook, while
the goats are taken to a certain room within the temple.
This room is rather a passage than a room, as there are
to it but two walls running north and south. The goats
are made to stand in turn in the middle of this room,
facing to the south. The chief priest stands to the east
of the goat, facing west, as he cuts off its head with the
chopper. He never ceases his mantrams, and the goats
never flinch—the effect of the mantrams. Several cocks
are then sacrificed in the same place, and over the
carcasses of goats and cocks there is sprinkled charcoal
powder mixed in water (karutta gurusi) and saffron
(turmeric) powder and lime-water (chukanna gurusi), the
flow of mantrams never ceasing the while. The three
Mūssads only see the sacrifice—a part of the rite which

796

is supremely secret. Equally so is that which follows. 789
The carcass of one goat will be taken out of the temple 782
by the northern door to the north side of the temple, 793
and from this place one of the temple servants, who is
blindfolded, drags it three times round the temple, the
Mūssads following closely, repeating their mantrams, the
drummer in front beating his drum softly with his fingers.
The drummer dare not look behind him, and does not know [534]
what is being done. After the third round, the drummer
and the temple servant go away, and the three Mūssads
cook some of the flesh of the goats and one or two of
the cocks (or a part of one) with rice. This rice, when
cooked, is taken to the kāvu (grove) to the north of the
temple, and there the Mūssads again ply their mantrams.
As each mantram is ended, a handful of saffron (turmeric) [533]
powder is flung on the rice, and all the time the drummer,
who by this time has returned, keeps up an obligato
pianissimo with his drum, using his fingers. He faces
the north, and the priests face the south. Presently the
priests run (not walk) once round the temple, carrying
the cooked rice, and scattering it wide as they go, repeating
mantrams. They enter the temple, and remain
within until daybreak. No one can leave the temple
until morning comes. Before daybreak, the temple is
thoroughly swept and cleaned, and then the Mūssads go
out, and the five Nambūtiris again enter before sunrise,
and perform the ordinary worship thrice in the day, for
this day only. The next morning, the Mūssad priests
return and resume their duties. Beyond noting that the 796
weirdness of the human tumult, busy in its religious 564
effusion, is on the last night enhanced by fireworks, [541]
mere description of the scene of the festival will not be
attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the
gallery of pretty Nāyar women looking on from the

[Facing p. 393]



AIYAPPAN TEMPLE, NEAR CALICUT.

796
564 garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below
[793] must be left to the imagination. It will have been
noticed that the Nambūtiris hold aloof from the festival; they purify the temple before and after, but no more.
796 The importance attached to the various offices of those
793 who are attached to the temple, by however slender
572 a thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble between two of the Mukkuvans, an uncle and nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple, and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. During the festival, one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about fifty miles distant), paid some fees, and established himself as the senior who had the right to carry the umbrella.

796 "An important local festival is that held near Palghat,
184 in November, in the little suburb Kalpāti inhabited entirely by Pattar Brāhmans from the east. But it is not a true Malayāli festival, and it suffices to mention its existence, for it in no way represents the religion of the Nāyar. The dragging of cars, on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath at Pūri in Orissa to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar, excepting only at Kalpāti, which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar.

782 "Near Chowghāt (Chavagāt), about 30 miles to the
[131] southward of Calicut, on the backwater, at a place called
[346] Guruvayūr, is a very important temple, the property of
[635] the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited
the festival on one occasion, and purchase was made of
[126] a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satis-
[532] faction of vows—a very rude representation of an infant in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man, the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by

a silver string as long as the giver is tall. Goldsmiths 782
working in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the [326]
gate of the temple, ready to provide at a moment's notice
the object any person intends to offer, in case he is not
already in possession of his votive offering. The subject
of vows can be touched on but incidentally here. A vow
is made by one desiring offspring, to have his hand or leg
cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any desire whatsoever,
and he decides in solemn affirmation to himself
to give a silver image of a child, a silver leg, and so on,
in the event of his having fulfilment of his desire.

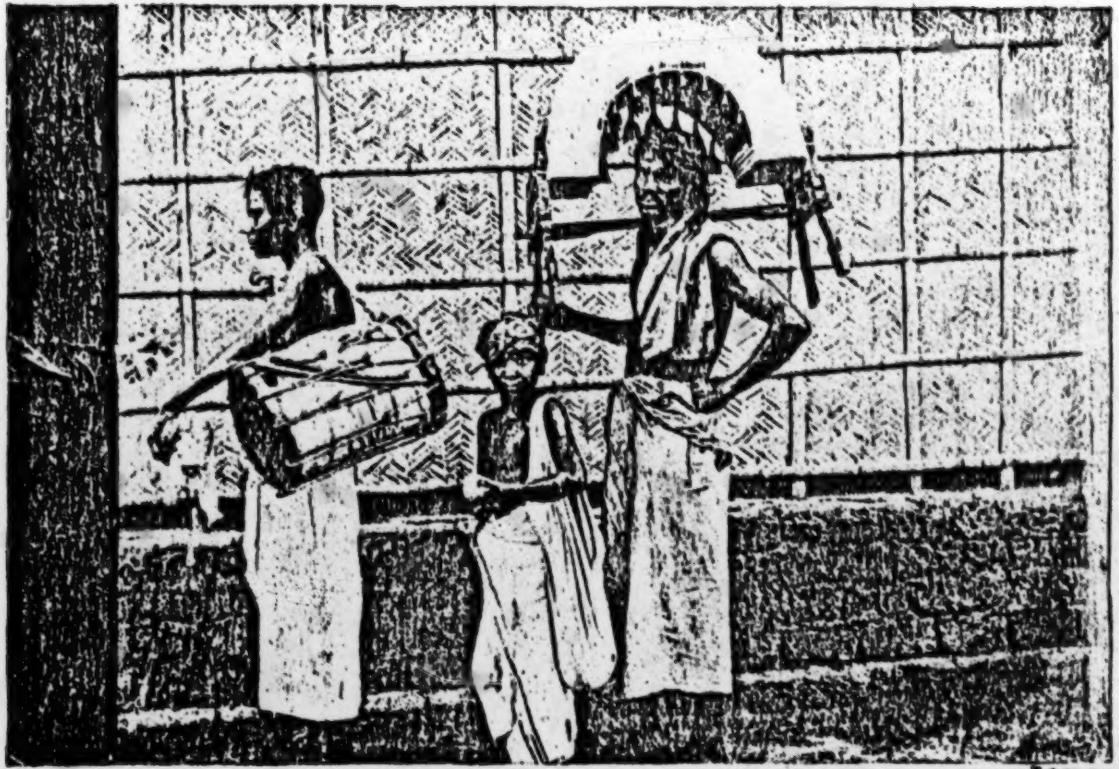
"A true Malayāli festival is that held at Kottiyūr in 796
North Malabar, in the forest at the foot of the Wynād
hills rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet from the sides of the little
glade where it is situated. It is held in July during the
height of the monsoon rain. Though it is a festival for
high and low, these do not mix at Kottiyūr. The Nāyars [564]
go first, and after a few days, the Nāyars having done,
the Tiyans, and so on. A curious feature of it is that the
people going to attend it are distinctly rowdy, feeling
that they have a right to abuse in the vilest and filthiest
terms everyone they see on the way—perhaps a few days'
march. And not only do they abuse to their hearts'
content in their exuberant excitement, but they use
personal violence to person and property all along the
road. They return like lambs. At Kottiyūr one sees [346]
a temple of Īsvara, there called Perumāl (or Perumāl
Īsvara) by the people, a low thatched building forming
a hollow square, in the centre of which is the shrine,
which I was not permitted to see. There were some [793]
Nambūtiri priests, who came out, and entered into
conversation. The festival is not held at the temple, but
in the forest about a quarter of a mile distant. This spot [778]
is deemed extremely sacred and dreadful. There was,

796 778 however, no objection to myself and my companions
visiting it; we were simply begged not to go. There
were with us a Nāyar and a Kurichchan, and the faces
of these men, when we proceeded to wade through the
little river, knee-deep and about thirty yards wide, in
order to reach the sacred spot, expressed anxious wonder.
They dared not acompany us across. No one (excepting,
of course, a Muhammadan) would go near the place,
unless during the few days of the festival, when it was
safe; at all other times any man going to the place is
destroyed instantly. Nothing on earth would have
persuaded the Nāyar or the Kurichchiyan to cross that
river. Orpheus proceeding to find his Eurydice, Danté
about to enter the Inferno, had not embarked on so
fearful a journey. About a hundred yards beyond the
stream, we came upon the sacred spot, a little glade in
the forest. In the centre of the glade is a circle of
piled up stones, 12 feet in diameter. In the middle of
the pile of stones is a rude lingam. Running east from
the circle of the lingam is a long shed, in the middle of
which is a long raised platform of brick, used apparently
as a place for cooking. Around the lingam there were
also thatched sheds, in which the people had lodged
[78] during the festival. Pilgrims going to this festival
[792] carry with them offerings of some kind. Tiyans take
young cocoanuts. Every one who returns brings with
him a swish made of split young leaves of the cocoanut
palm."

796 Of the Kottiyūr festival, the following account is
788 given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "The Nambūdiri
[793] priests live in a little wayside temple at Kottiyūr, but
[778] the true shrine is a quarter of a mile away in the forest
across one of the feeder streams of the Valarpattanam
river. For eleven months in the year, the scene is

inconceivably desolate and dreary; but during the month 796
Edavam (May-June) upwards of 50,000 Nāyars and 788
Tiyans from all parts of Malabar throng the shrine for
the twenty-eight days of the annual festival. During the
rest of the year, the temple is given up to the revels of
Siva and Parvati, and the impious Hindu who dares to
intrude is consumed instantly to ashes. The two great
ceremonies are the Neyyāttam and the Elanīrāttam, the
pouring of ghee (clarified butter) and the pouring of the
milk of the green cocoanut. The former is performed [564]
by the Nāyars, who attend the festival first, and the
latter by Tiyans. In May, all roads lead to Kottiyūr, [785]
and towards the middle of the month the ghee pourers, [783]
as the Nāyar pilgrims are called, who have spent the
previous four weeks in fasting and purificatory rites,
assemble in small shrines subordinate to the Kottiyūr
temple. Thence, clad in white, and bearing each
upon his head a pot of ghee, they set forth in large
bodies headed by a leader. At Manattana the pilgrims
from all parts of Malabar meet, and thence to Kottiyūr
the procession is unbroken. However long their jour- [195]
ney, the pilgrims must eat only once, and the more filthy
their language, the more orthodox is their conduct.
As many as five thousand pots of ghee are poured over
the lingam every year. After the Neyyāttam ceremony,
the Nāyars depart, and it is the turn of the Tiyans.
Their preparations are similar to those of the Nāyars,
and their language *en route* is even more startling.
Eruvatti near Kadirūr is the place where most of them [782]
assemble for their pilgrimage, and their green cocoanuts
are presented gratis by the country people as an offering
to the temple. The Elanīrāttam ceremony begins at
midnight, and the pilgrims heap up their cocoanuts in
front of the shrine continuously till the evening of the

[Facing p.397]



PALNÍ PILGRIM AND KÂVADI.

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788 same day. Each Tiyan then marches thrice round the heap, and falls prostrate before the lingam ; and a certain Nāyar sub-caste removes the husks preparatory to the [789] spilling of the milk. The festival finally closes with a mysterious ceremony, in which ghee and mantrams play a great part, performed for two days consecutively by the presiding Nambūdiri, and Kottiyūr is then deserted for another year."

"A shrine," Mr. Fawcett continues, "to which the Malayālis, Nāyars included, resort is that of Subramania at Palni in the north-west corner of the Madura district about a week's march from the confines of Malabar near [765] Palghat. Not only are vows paid to this shrine, but men, [302] letting their hair grow for a year after their father's [782] death, proceed to have it cut there. The plate shows an ordinary Palni pilgrim. The arrangement which he 796 is carrying is called a kāvadi. There are two kinds of 788 kāvadi, a milk kāvadi containing milk, and a fish kāvadi 782 containing fish, in a pot. The vow may be made in respect of either, each being appropriate to certain circumstances. When the time comes near for the pilgrim to start for Palni, he dresses in reddish orange cloths, shoulders his kāvadi, and starts out. Together with a man ringing a bell, and perhaps one with a tom-tom, with ashes on his face, he assumes the rôle of a beggar. The well-to-do are inclined to reduce the beggar period to the minimum ; but a beggar every votary must be, and as a beggar he goes to Palni in all humbleness and humiliation, and there he fulfils his vow, leaves his kāvadi and his hair, and a small sum of money. Though the individuals about to be noticed were not Nāyars, their cases illustrate very well the religious idea of the Nāyar as expressed under certain circumstances, for between the Nāyars and these there

is in this respect little if any difference. It was at Guru- 796
vayūr in November, 1895. On a high raised platform 788
under a peepul tree were a number of people under 782
vows, bound for Palni. A boy of 14 had suffered as a
child from epilepsy, and seven years ago his father vowed
on his behalf that, if he were cured, he would make the
pilgrimage to Palni. He wore a string of beads round
his neck, and a like string on his right arm. These
were in some way connected with the vow. His head
was bent, and he sat motionless under his kāvadi,
leaning on the bar, which, when he carried it, rested on
his shoulder. He could not go to Palni until it was
revealed to him in a dream when he was to start. He
had waited for this dream seven years, subsisting on
roots (yams, etc.), and milk—no rice. Now he had
had the long-looked-for dream, and was about to start.
Another pilgrim was a man wearing an oval band of 796
silver over the lower portion of the forehead, almost 788
covering his eyes; his tongue protruding beyond the 785
teeth, and kept in position by a silver skewer through it.
The skewer was put in the day before, and was to be
left in for forty days. He had been fasting for two years.
He was much under the influence of his god, and
whacking incessantly at a drum in delirious excitement.
Several of the pilgrims had a handkerchief tied over
the mouth, they being under a vow of silence. One [782]
poor man wore the regular instrument of silence, the
mouth-lock—a wide silver band over the mouth, and a
skewer piercing both cheeks. He sat patiently in a
nice tent-like affair, about three feet high. People fed
him with milk, etc., and he made no effort to procure
food, relying merely on what was given him. The use
of the mouth-lock is common with the Nāyars when
they assume the pilgrim's robes and set out for Palni;

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788 and I have often seen many of them garbed and mouth-
[785] locked, going off on a pilgrimage to that place. Pilgrims generally go in crowds under charge of a priestly guide, one who, having made a certain number of journeys to the shrine, wears a peculiar sash and other gear. They call themselves pūjāris, and are quite *au fait* with all the ceremonial prior to the journey, as well as with the exigencies of the road. As I stood there, one of these pūjāris stood up amidst the recumbent crowd. He raised his hands towards the temple a little to the west, and then spread out his hands as if invoking a blessing on the people around him. Full of religious fervour, he was (apparently at any rate) unconscious of all but the spiritual need of his flock.

796 "Brief mention must be made of the festival held
788 at Kodungallūr near Cranganore in the northernmost
184 corner of the Cochin State, as it possesses some strange features peculiar to Malabar, and is much frequented by the Nāyars. I have been disappointed in obtaining particulars of the festival, so make the following excerpt from Logan's Manual of Malabar. 'It takes the people in great crowds from their homes. The whole country near the lines of march rings with the shouts "Nada-a Nada-a" of the pilgrims to the favourite shrine. Of what takes place when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine, the cry of "Nada-a Nada-a" (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled
[195] at the goddess (a Bhagavati) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine, they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys of

opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman 796
caste, styled Kūli Muttatta Arayan, has the privilege of 788
being the first to begin the work of polluting the Bhoot 184
or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary [564]
to enter. Cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The [782]
worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after
paying his vows. Instead of water, he proceeds outside
and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nāyar
serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tiyars [564]
and low caste people. The temple was originally only
a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in
the temple is said to have been introduced only of
recent years.' It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent.
My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans
opens the festival by solemnly making a fæcal deposit
on the image. Here again there is the same strange
union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and
irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest
religious feeling."

Of the cock festival at Cranganore, the following 796
account is given by Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar * in his 778
interesting little book on Malabar and its folk. "In 776
the midst of its native charms is situated a temple
dedicated to Kali, the goddess who presides over the
infectious diseases, cholera and small-pox. She is a [753]
virgin goddess, whom no quantity of blood will satisfy.
The temple is an old-fashioned one, presenting no
striking architectural peculiarities. The priestly classes [564]
attached to it are not, as usual, Brāhmins, but a peculiar [795]
sect called Adigals, of whom there are but three families [793]
in the whole of Malabar. The Brāhmins are purposely
excluded from participation in the poojah ceremonies,

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* Malabar and its Folk, Madras, 1900.

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796 lest their extreme sanctity might increase the powers
778 of the goddess to a dangerous extent. Poojahs are
[793] daily offered to her. An annual festival known as the
[782] Bharani, connected with this goddess, plays a most
important part in the religious history of Malabar. It
comes off in the Malayalam month of Meenam (about
788 March or April). Pilgrimages undertaken to the temple
796 on this occasion are potent enough to safeguard the
pilgrims, and their friends and relations, from the
perilous attacks of cholera and small-pox. Hence people
resort thither annually by thousands from almost all
parts of Malabar; and, the more north you go, the
stronger will you find the hold which the goddess has
[782] upon the popular imagination. The chief propitiatory
offering on the occasion is the sacrifice of
cocks. In fact, every family makes a point of undertaking
this sacred mission. People arrange to start
on it at an auspicious moment, on a fixed day in
small isolated bodies. Preparations are made for the
journey. Rice, salt, chillies, curry-stuffs, betel leaves
and nuts, a little turmeric powder and pepper, and,
above all, a number of cocks form an almost complete
paraphernalia of the pilgrimage. These are all
gathered and preserved in separate bundles inside a large
[293] bag. When the appointed hour comes, they throw this
bag on their shoulders, conceal their money in their
[481] girdles, and, with a native-fashioned umbrella in the one
hand and a walking-stick in the other, they start, each
from his own house, to meet the brother pilgrims at
the rendezvous. Here a foreman is selected practically
[533] by common consent. Then commences the vociferous
recitation of that series of obscene songs and ballads,
which characterises the pilgrimage all along. The foreman
it is that opens the ball. He is caught up by others

in equally loud and profuse strains. This is continued 788 right up till the beginning of their homeward journey. 796 Nobody whom they come across on the way can successfully escape the coarse Billingsgate of these religious zealots. Even women are not spared. Perhaps it is in their case that the pilgrims wax all the more eloquently vulgar. A number of cock's feathers are stuck or tied upon the tip of a stick, and with this as a wand they begin to dance and pipe in a set style, which is extremely revolting to every sense of decency. Some of the pilgrims walk all the distance to the temple, while others go by boat or other conveyance; but in neither case do they spare any passer-by. Hundreds of gallons of arrack and [273] toddy are consumed during the festival. The pilgrims reach the temple in their dirty attire. The temple premises are crowded to overflowing. The worship of 788 the goddess is then commenced. The offerings consist 796 of the sacrifice of cocks at the temple altar, turmeric 782 powder, but principally of pepper, as also some other objects of lesser importance. A particular spot inside the temple is set apart for the distribution of what is called manjal prasadam (turmeric powder on which divine blessings have been invoked). The work of doling it out is done by young maidens, who are during the process subjected to ceaseless volleys of vile and vulgar abuse. Now, leaving out of account the minor ceremonies, we come to the principal one, viz., the sacrifice of cocks. The popular idea is that the greater the number of cocks sacrificed, the greater is the efficacy of the pilgrimage. Hence men vie with one another in the number of cocks that they carry on the journey. The sacrifice is begun, and then there takes place a regular scramble for the sanctified spot reserved for this butchering ceremony. One man holds a cock by the

788
796 trunk, and another pulls out its neck by the head, and, in
782 the twinkling of an eye, by the intervention of a sharpened knife, the head is severed from the trunk. The blood then gushes forth in forceful and continuous jets, and is poured on a piece of granite specially reserved. Then another is similarly slaughtered, and then as many as each of the pilgrims can bring. In no length of time, the whole of the temple yard is converted into one horrible expanse of blood, rendering it too slippery to be safely walked over. The piteous cries and death throes of the poor devoted creatures greatly intensify the horror of the scene. The stench emanating from the blood mixing with the nauseating smell of arrack renders the occasion
796 all the more revolting. One other higher and more
788 acceptable kind of offering requires more than a passing
755 mention. When a man is taken ill of any infectious
782 disease, his relations generally pray to this goddess for
his recovery, solemnly covenanting to perform what goes by the name of a thulabharum ceremony. This consists in placing the patient in one of the scale-pans of a huge balance, and weighing him against gold, or more generally pepper (and sometimes other substances as well), deposited in the other scale-pan. Then this weight of the substance is offered to the goddess. This is to be performed right in front of the goddess in
788 the temple yard. The usual offerings being over, the
796 homeward journey of the pilgrims is begun. Though
the festival is called Bharani, yet all the pilgrims must vacate the temple on the day previous to the Bharani
[776] day. For, from that day onwards, the temple doors are
all shut up, and, for the next seven days, the whole place is given over to the worst depredations of the countless demons over whom this blood-thirsty goddess holds sway. No human beings can safely remain there, lest

they might become a prey to these ravenous demons. 788
796 In short, the Bharani day inaugurates a reign of terror [976]
in the locality, lasting for these seven days. Afterwards,
all the dirt is removed. The temple is cleansed and [783]
sanctified, and again left open to public worship. The
pilgrims return, but not in the same manner in which
they repaired thither. During the backward journey,
no obscene songs or expressions are indulged in.
They are to come back quietly and calmly, without any
kind of demonstrations. They get back to their respec- [431]
tive homes, and distribute the sandals and other pujah
substances to their relations and friends who have
elected to remain at home; and the year's pilgrimage
is brought to a close."

"The month Karkkatakam," Mr. Fawcett writes, 526
"when the Malayālis say the body is cool, is the time 875
when, according to custom, the Nāyar youths practice 564
physical exercises. At Payōli in North Malabar, when
I was there in 1895, the local instructor of athletics was a Paravan, a mason by caste. As he had the adjunct Kurup to his name, it took some time to discover the fact. Teachers of his ilk are invariably of the Paravan caste, and, when they are believed to be properly accomplished, they are given the honorific Kurup. So carefully are things regulated that no other person was permitted to teach athletics within the amsham (a local area, a small county), and his womenfolk had privileges, they only being the midwives who could attend on the Nāyar women of the amsham. His fee for a course of exercises for the month was ten rupees. He, and some of his pupils, gave an exhibition of their quality.
Besides bodily contortions and somersaults, practiced in 526
a long low-roofed shed having a sandy floor, there is
play with the following instruments :—watta ; cheruvadi,

526 a short stick; and a stick like a quarter-staff called a sariravadi, or stick the length of one's body. The watta is held in the right hand as a dagger; it is used to stab or strike and, in some ingenious way, turn over an opponent. The total length of the watta is two feet, and of the cheruvadi about three feet. The latter is squared at the ends, and is but a short staff. It is held in the right hand a few inches from the end, and is used for striking and guarding only. The sariravadi is held at or near one end by one or by both hands. The distance between the hands is altered constantly, and so is the end of the stick, which is grasped now by one, now by another end by either hand, as occasion may require; sometimes it is grasped in the middle. The performance with these simple things was astonishing. I should say the watta and the cheruvadi represented swords, or rather that they were used for initiation or practice in swordmanship, when the Nâyars were the military element in Malabar. The opponents, who faced each other with the sariravadi or quarter-staff, stood thirty feet apart, and, as if under the same stimulus, each kicked one leg high in the air, gave several lively bounds in the air, held their staff horizontally in front with out-stretched arms, came down slowly on the haunches, placed the staff on the ground, bent over, and touched it with the forehead. With a sudden bound they were again on their feet, and, after some preliminary pirouetting, went for each other tooth and nail. The sword play, which one sees during festive ceremonies, such as a marriage or the like, is done by the hereditary retainers, who fight imaginary foes, and destroy and vanquish opponents with much contortion of body, and always indulge in much of this preliminary overture to their performance. There is always, by

way of preliminary, a high kick in the air, followed by 526 squatting on the haunches, bounding high, turning, twisting, pirouetting, and all the time swinging the sword unceasingly above, below, behind the back, under the arm or legs, in ever so many impossible ways. Nâyar shields are made of wood, covered with leather, usually coloured bright red. Within the boss are some hard seeds, or metal balls loose in a small space, so that there is a jingling sound like that of the small bells on the ankles of the dancer, when the shield is oscillated or shaken in the hand. The swords are those which were used ordinarily for fighting. There are also swords of many patterns for processional and other purposes, more or less ornamented about the handle, and half way up the blade."

"The Nâyars," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes, 631 "have a distinct feudal organisation, and the division of their territories had an unmistakeable reference to it. The territorial unit was the dêsam, presided over by a Dâsavazhi. A number of dêsams adjoining one another constituted a nâdu, which was under the jurisdiction of a chieftain called the Nâduvazhi. Above the Nâduvazhis was the Râjah, the highest suzerain in the country. In course of time, each nâdu split itself up into a certain number of taras, over the affairs of which a Karanavan, or elder, presided. An assembly of these Karanavans [613] constituted the six hundred—an old socio-military [623] organisation of the Nâyars in mediæval times. These 631 six hundred are referred to in two places in the second 175 Syrian Christian document, which bears the date 925 623 A.D. In a South Travancore inscription, dated 371 M.E., the same organisation is referred to as Venattarunuru, or the six hundred of Venad, and one of their duties evidently related to the supervision of the

631 [175] [623] working of temples and charitable institutions connected therewith. As Venad was divided into eighteen districts in ancient days, there might have been altogether eighteen six hundred in the country. The Nāduvazhis possessed considerable authority in all social matters, and possessed enough lands to be cultivated by their Kudiyans. A feudal basis was laid for the whole organisation. Large numbers served as soldiers in times of war, and cultivated their lands when the country was quiet. In modern times, none of them take to military service in Travancore, except those employed as sepoys in the Nāyar Brigade."

[901] Concerning the organisation of the Nāyars, Mr. Logan writes that they were, "until the British occupied the country, the militia of the district (Malabar). This name implies that they were the 'leaders' of the people. Originally they seem to have been organised into six hundreds, and each six hundred seems to have had assigned to it the protection of all the people in a nād or country. The nād was in turn split up into taras, a Dravidian word signifying originally a foundation, the foundation of a house, hence applied collectively to a street, as in Tamil teru, in Telugu teruvu, and in Canarese and Tulu teravu. The tara was the Nāyar territorial unit of organisation for civil purposes, and was governed by representatives of the caste, who were styled Kāranavar or elders. The six hundred was probably composed exclusively of those Karanavar or elders, who were in some parts called Mukhyastans (chief men) or Madhyastans (mediators), or Pramānis (chief men), and there seem to have been four families of them to each tara, so that the nād must have originally consisted of one hundred and fifty taras. This tara organisation of the protector caste played a most important

part in the political history of the country, for it was 631
the great bulwark against the tyranny and oppression
of the Rājas. The evidence of the Honourable East
India Company's linguist (interpreter, agent) at Calicut,
which appears in the diary of the Tellicherry Factory
under date 28th May, 1746, deserves to be here reproduced.
He wrote as follows: 'These Nāyars, being
heads of the Calicut people, resemble the parliament, and
do not obey the king's dictates in all things, but chastise
his ministers when they do unwarrantable acts.' The
parliament referred to must have been the kūttam
(assembly) of the nād. The kūttam answered many
purposes when combined action on the part of the
community was necessary. The Nāyars assembled in [623]
their kūttams whenever hunting, or war, or arbitration,
or what not was in hand, and this organisation does not
seem to have been confined to Malabar, for the koot
organisation of the people of South Canara gave the
British officers much trouble in 1832–33. In so far as 631
Malabar was concerned, the system seems to have 643
remained in an efficient state down to the time of the
British occupation, and the power of the Rājas was
strictly limited. Mr. Murdoch Brown, of Anjarakandi,
who knew the country well, thus wrote to Mr. Francis
Buchanan in the earliest years of the present (nineteenth)
century regarding the despotic action of the Rājas when
constituted, after the Mysorean conquest, the revenue
agents of the Government of Haidar Ali. 'By this new
order of things, these latter (the Rājas) were vested
with despotic authority over the other inhabitants,
instead of the very limited prerogatives that they had
enjoyed by the feudal system, under which they could
neither exact revenue from the lands of their vassals, nor
exercise any, direct authority in their districts.' And

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643 again, 'The Rāja was no longer what he had been, the head of a feudal aristocracy with limited authority, but the all-powerful deputy of a despotic prince, whose military force was always at his command to curb or chastise any of the chieftains who were inclined to dispute or disobey his mandates.'[*] From the earliest times, therefore, down to the end of the eighteenth century, the Nāyar tara and nād organization kept the country from oppression and tyranny on the part of the rulers, and to this fact more than to any other is due the comparative prosperity, which the Malayāli country so long enjoyed, and which made Calicut at one time the great emporium of trade between the East and the West. But, besides protection, the Nāyars had 631 originally another most important function in the body politic. Besides being protectors, they were also supervisors or overseers, a duty which, as a very ancient deed testifies, was styled kānam—a Dravidian word derived from the verb kānuka (to see, etc.). Parasu Rāman (so the tradition preserved in the Kēralolpatti runs) separated the Nāyars into taras, and ordered that to them belonged the duty of supervision (*lit.* kan = the eye), the executive power (*lit.* kei = the hand, as the emblem of power), and the giving of orders (*lit.* kalpana, order, command), so as to prevent the rights from being curtailed, or suffered to fall into disuse. The Nāyars were originally the overseers or supervisors of the nād, and they seem to have been employed in this capacity as the collectors of the share of produce of the land originally reserved for Government purposes. As remuneration for this service, and for their other function as protectors, another share of the produce of the soil

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[*] Buchanan, Mysore, Canara and Malabar.

seems to have been reserved specially for them. It 631 would be well worth the study of persons acquainted with other districts of the Presidency to ascertain whether somewhat similar functions to these (protection and supervision) did not originally appertain to the Kāvalgars of Tamil districts and the Kāpus in the Telugu country, for both of these words seem to have come from the same root as the Malayālam kānam. And it is significant that the Tamil word now used for proprietorship in the soil is kāni-yātchi, to which word the late Mr. F. W. Ellis in his paper on Mirasi Rights assigned a similar derivation."

The occupation of the Nāyars is described by Mr. N. 463 Subramani Aiyar as "comprising all kinds of worldly pursuits. So late as the end of the eighteenth century, [701] there were with the then Mahārāja of Travancore a hundred thousand soldiers, consisting of Nāyars and Chovas, armed with arrows, spears, swords and battle-axes. The chief occupation of the Nāyars is agriculture. [241] Cultivation of a slipshod, time-honoured type is the forte of the Nāyar, for which he has always found time from times of old, though engaged in other occupations as well. In the Velakali, a kind of mock fight, which [526] is one of the items of the utasom programme in every [292] important temple in Malabar, the dress worn by the Nāyars is supposed to be their ancient military costume. Even now, among the Nāyars who form the Mahārāja's [241] own Brigade, agriculture, to which they are enabled to attend during all their off-duty days, goes largely to supplement their monthly pay. Various other occupations, all equally necessary for society, have been, according to the Kēralavakasakrama, assigned to the Nāyars, and would seem to have determined their original sub-divisions. They are domestic servants in Brāhman [357]

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[357] and Kshatriya houses and temples, and deal in dairy
produce, as well as being engaged in copper-sheet
roofing, tile-making, pottery, palanquin-bearing, and so
[178] on. But these traditional occupations are fast ceasing
872 under the ferment of a new civilisation. In the matter
of education, the Nāyars occupy a prominent position.
Almost every Nāyar girl is sent to the village school
to learn the three R's, quite as much as a matter of
[212] course as the schooling of boys. This constitutes a
feature of Malabar life that makes it the most literate
country in all India, especially in respect of the female
875 sex. After Rāmanujam Ezhuttachchan developed and
enriched the Malayālam language, numerous Asans or
village teachers came into existence in different parts of
873 Malabar. After a preliminary study of Malayālam, such
as desired higher, *i.e.*, Sanskrit education, got discipled
to an Ambalavāsi or a Sastri. Even to-day the
estimable desire to study Sanskrit is seen in some
Nāyar youths, who have readily availed themselves of
the benefit of the local Sanskrit college. In respect
of English education, the Nāyars occupy a prominent
[658] position. The facility afforded by the Government of
Travancore for the study of English is being largely
availed of by Nāyars, and it is a matter deserving to
be prominently recorded that, in recent years, several
Nāyar girls have passed the Matriculation examination
of the University of Madras."

212 It is noted, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that "the
181 Nāyars as a class are the best educated and the most
advanced of the communities in Malabar (excepting
perhaps the Pattar Brāhmans, who are not strictly a
Malayālam class), and are intellectually the equals of
[464] the Brāhmans of the East Coast. Many of them have
risen to the highest posts in Government, and the caste

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has supplied many of the leading members of the learned professions."

Nāy (dog).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba.

Nāyinar.—Nāyinar, Nāyanar, or Nainar, has been recorded as a section of Vellālas, who are thought to be descended from Jains who were converted to Hinduism, and as a title of Jains, Kaikōlans, Pallis, and Udaiyāns. Nāyanikulam occurs as a synonym of Bōya. The word Nāyinar is the same as Nāyaka, meaning lord or master, and the Saivite saints, being religious teachers, are so called, *e.g.*, Sundara Mūrti Nāyanar.

Nāyinda.—Recorded, in the Mysore Census Report, 1901, as the name of a caste, which follows the hereditary occupation of barber, and also of agriculture. "They are," it is there said, "members of the village hierarchy. They are paid, like the Agasa (washerman), in kind for their services. They are also fiddlers, and have the exclusive right of wind instruments. They are known as Kēlasiga or Hajām. They are both Saivites and Vaishnavites. A section of them wear the lingam, and follow Lingayetism. They are known as Silavanta. These people are largely in requisition at feasts, marriages, etc., when they form the music band." Kelasi is the name of a Canarese barber caste, and Hajām is a Hindustani word for barber.

Nedungādi.—This name, denoting a settlement in Nedunganād in the Walluvanād taluk of Malabar, has been returned as a sub-caste of Nāyars and Sāmantas.

Nekkāra.—A small class of washermen in South Canara. The women only are said to do the washing, while the men are employed as devil-dancers.

Nellika (*Phyllanthus Emblica*).—An illam of Tiyan.

Nellu (paddy, unhusked rice).—A gōtra of Kurni.

amsham---a local area; a small county
anandravan---the eldest male member of the taravād is called Karanavan. All male members who are junior to him are called anandravan.
kaniyan--astrologer
karakkars--villagers
karanavan--senior male of the women's taravad
kāvadi--food offerings (milk or fish)
kulams--exogamous subdivisions of the castes
kuttams--Nayar assemblies (political)
mach champikkar--the masters of ceremonies at a Nayar Tali-kettu (in Travancore)
manavalan (pillai)--bridegroom
mantrams--magical verses
mattu (change)--a rite or service performed following childbirth for purification purposes (by members of the mannan castes for Nayars).
nambudri--chief priests (Brahman)
sambandham--an alliance between a man and woman by reason of which they in accordance with the custom of the community to which they belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to do so as man and wife.

sanchayanam--the disposal of the cremated remains of a dead person on the 14th day after the initial funeral
sēshakriya--offerings made to the spirit of a dead person
stānis--chieftains of the Nad
tarwād (taravād)--a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor
vitu--a Nayar house (including grounds)